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COMMONWEAL

PLAYING FOR TIME IN THE MIDDLE EAST
J.J. Goldberg

WORDS FROM THE FUTURE

PATTERNS FROM THE PAST

The Editors

SEMANTICS AND STYLE IN AN ABORTION CAMPAIGN
Mary C. Segers

E DEATH OF HN PAUL I
arbara A. Bannon

INTER-DEPENDENCE FOR ALL
J. Bryan Hehir

ELECTIONS IN CHILE
Margaret C. Crahan

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CORRESPONDENCE

Ill-gotten gains

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: Your editorial on Middle East policy, "Ties That Blind" [October 20], merits little more than a snicker when it asserts that "there is no right of conquest followed by colonization."

Commonweal and its editors live on land wrested from the Native Americans. Unlike the Jews whose historical claim on Palestine antedates that of the Arabs by centuries, the white settlers had no comparable prior presence on this continent.

Yet *Commonweal* has not to my knowledge advocated that the American people give back so much as an inch of this country or otherwise cease to profit from that great land grab.

I realize it's a lot easier to tell somebody else to surrender a piece of their country. But until you renounce your share of the benefits from the ill-gotten gains with which the American pioneers endowed this country, your moralism with respect to Israel can be taken no more seriously than that of an animal-rights advocate who continues without embarrassment to chomp down his prime rib. OSCAR WALD

Israel's influence

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: Your editorial on U.S.-Mideast policy [October 20] assumes many things that reasonably call for proof. You imply that the major factor in formulating our Mideast policy is the influence of Israel's American supporters, which in your view often overrides the judgments of even the executive branch of our government. Nowhere do you even hint at the possibility that the corporations standing to benefit from arms sales to the Arab world (after all, a billion dollars' worth of tanks for Saudi Arabia is real money even to General Dynamics) or from oil concessions in the Persian Gulf area are also diligently looking out for their interests through all the standard tactics of the industrial-military complex.

Indeed the Congress has over the years blocked some, but by no means all, executive branch proposals that Israel opposed. But it does not follow from that fact that the president and State Department defended the American interest while the Congress acted as Israel's errand boy. It only supports the proposition that the Congress made its own judgment as to the merits of the proposals in question. A good many of Israel's staunchest supporters represent districts with a negligible Jewish vote. It would seem likely that they believe the American interest is better served by a policy more supportive of Israel than that favored by the president and the State Department. And it isn't hard to see why: the presence in the Middle East of a pro-American democracy able to defend itself has made it unnecessary to station American troops in that part of the world at enormous cost, as we still must in Europe and Southeast Asia. That alone is of far more consequence than the noises made by Palestinian Arabs and their allies.

The very names Judea and Samaria (and I congratulate you for using those names instead of "West Bank") testify that the territories that Israel now holds are historically Jewish lands. Jews lived there and exercised sovereignty in those areas centuries before the first Arab arrived on the scene during the Islamic wars of conquest in the 700s. Any archaeologist can verify that for you even if you deny any biblical basis of Israel's claim. Moreover, the last Jews did not leave until the Arabs threw them out in 1948, culminating a campaign of violence that started with anti-Jewish rioting in 1920.

In this quarrel, to assert as you do that there is no "right of conquest followed by colonization," is simply irrelevant. One validates either the Arab conquests of the past or the Jewish reconquest of the present. *Commonweal* obviously prefers the former options. But it has not shown that there is less justice on the side of the latter.

ZALMAN GAIBEL

The editors reply:

Our editorial made two points, which we reaffirm:

1. It was unseemly and revelatory that Messrs. Baker and Cheney found it necessary, before discussing a proposed sale of tanks to Saudi Arabia, to ask Messrs. Shamir and Rabin not to lobby Congress against the deal, and that, to boost their powers of persuasion in the matter, they offered new financial and military arrangements valuable to Israel, at some cost to the U.S. As Mr. Gaibel says, oil companies and arms manufacturers do have clout in Washington; but they don't get *that* kind of attention.

2. Israel's request for loan guarantees from the U.S. to help build housing units for Soviet Jewish émigrés, some or most of them in the occupied territories, was inappropriate in view of stated U.S. policy that such settlements are questionable legally, and in any case serve to hinder progress toward peace and security in the region.

Our correspondents raise other points worth discussing:

—Israel's ability to defend itself and to sustain its economy rests heavily on assis-

(Continued on page 25)

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COMMONWEAL

CONTENTS

Volume CXVII, Number 1

Correspondence	2
Editorials	3
Uncertain future: *Margaret E. Crahan*	5
Champagne for the losers: *Adolph Schalk*	6
Interdependence for all: *J. Bryan Hehir*	7
If nothing is knowable . . .: *David R. Carlin, Jr.*	8
Semantics & style in an abortion campaign: *Mary C. Segers*	10
Playing for time in the Middle East: *J.J. Goldberg*	13
Screen: *Tom O'Brien*	16
Stage: *Gerald Weales*	18

BOOKS

Democracy and Its Critics: *Dennis Hale*	19
A Thief in the Night: *Barbara A. Bannon*	20
Straight Shooting: *Don Wycliff*	22
Whose Keeper?: *Jean Bethke Elshtain*	23

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Words from the future

We have a communication from a friend who was/is caught in a time warp. She now occupies a niche in the very late nineties, from when she sends these observations: You should realize that I'm not allowed to tell you—at least not directly—what's happened between your Now and mine. You'll get only gibberish if I get too explicit about anything that, from your perspective, is still going to happen but is now history to me. (Actually that's how I'm learning about the nineties: reading end-of-the-decade books and articles, all the while pretending to people that I lived through it as they did—even though it was only weeks ago, on your calendar, when I did my skip.)

I'm staying away from end-of-the-century and end-of-the-millennium stuff, so that I can sort out my own memories of the eighties. It follows that the hindsight you'll get will be my very own. That's even more the case because shortly after switching decades I moved to New Zealand, where nobody knew me before or knows me well enough now to change my thinking. I came here partly for that anonymity, and partly because it's healthier here since the @@@@@!@@@@@@ #@@@&@@]{?@@@ and the ####**########+#!\><####)#####.

So here goes. In my new Now, my lead thoughts about the eighties are just more intense versions of what I was saying and thinking ten years ago—and that's not because I'm set in my ways, being ten years older (it seems I'm not). What I know now tells me I was right then. Nobody was serious enough. Russell Baker was maybe an exception, but everybody thought he was joking. Not even Woody Allen was *really* serious. Not even *Commonweal*. Not even me. About *anything*. Our debt, Brazil's, Mexico's. Acid rain, the hole in the sky, the gunk in the air, the forests, kid prostitutes. Sludge in the ocean, chemicals in the aquifers, nuclear garbage piling up, people living on the streets, drug gangs with Uzis, babies starving in so many countries.

People did complain about the *sleaziness* of politics, but not (or not enough) about its *emptiness*. And people talked about the "sensationalism" of the media, or the nosiness of reporters, but not about their nationalism, their establishmentarianism. It was a terrible struggle to find out what was really going on anywhere our own government was involved—Nicaragua, for example, or El Salvador: you almost had to go there yourself to find out, and when you came back nobody would believe you. Not while it still counted, anyway; maybe in five years or so. I wish I could tell you what finally came out about Iran-*contra*, right after ^&^&^%^&^&^& left office. Even to Ollie North, they tell me, it came as a ++ll*****%%%!!

It wasn't just the media. Even when they got the story straight, people believed Reagan, and then Bush, because it was easier. And because most of us were nationalists too, even jingoes, and not just about America. About capitalism, too, free enterprise,

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the sacredness of the market, the triumph of the human spirit manifested, say, in the infant mortality rate in Harlem, considered in the context of pay scales for CEOs, rock performers, designated hitters. Or consider the Valdez oil spill. I remember checking the price of Exxon shares for a while after the accident. Hardly a ripple.

I was troubled then, and am more so now, by our response to the fall of the Wall and all that. In the papers I read and the conversations I heard, there was too much easy gloating. The bad guys and their bad ideas were defeated, which was true enough. It wasn't so true that we were, therefore, certified good guys with pure hearts and sound understanding of how the world works. *Their* contradictions caught up with them first. More of us could have seen, should have seen, the cracks in our own walls. And those who did see what was happening could have said more and *done* more. That's what I mean about not being serious.

From me, as I said, this is hindsight. I wish I could back it up by sending you a picture of Pretoria today, or of the Florida keys, or of Jerusalem. I wish I could tell you what's now housed in the New York Stock Exchange, and what people are trying to grow in Iowa. I can't. But I can give you a ringing, if partial, endorsement of an inanity Ronald Reagan once uttered during a speech at the UN (he thought it was a profundity): "I believe that the future is far nearer than most of us would dare hope." Only hope is not the right word.

PATTERNS FROM THE PAST

George Bush's vision of foreign policy is, among other things, dated. Faced with a problem in one of our Latin American dependencies, he did what frustrated gringo presidents have so often done before; he ordered an invasion: massive, life-threatening surgery to remove a thorn in his side. Twenty-five thousand U.S. soldiers went to war. In consequence, at least four hundred Panamanian civilians are dead. Removed. Buried. Out of it. So also some 23 U.S. combatants and 297 Panamanian military. Homes, stores, whole neighborhoods are ruined. Daniel Ortega, along with legions of other prideful Latinos, is furnished with yet more evidence that the tiger has not changed his stripes. A tiger that prefers, as in Grenada, to feed on mice.

The Kremlin, has belatedly proclaimed that the use of murderous force to achieve foreign policy aims is no longer appropriate. The U.S. says: That's what we've always said—but not in our back yard. Under the pressures of reality, Central American leaders have desperately sought means of solving regional disputes through diplomacy and negotiation. The U.S. not only dissents from but undercuts these efforts.

American media, and the American public, tend to judge foreign policy initiatives by their short-term consequences. Using that criterion, Mr. Bush has announced victory. It does appear at this writing that Manuel Noriega—who was, indeed, a tyrant—may have been permanently demobilized. It may also be that the popularly elected government of President Guillermo Endara will take hold, that the Panamanian economy will recover from the effects of U.S.-imposed sanctions, and that the Panamanian people will at last take charge of their political life, their canal, their political destiny. It may even be that U.S. policy can turn from unilateral intrusion and military invasion to more democratic means of promoting democracy.

But don't bet on it. George Bush's foreign policy vision does not respond to what is happening in the world now; it rather reflects his personal experience and the spurious "expertise" he has gained from it. The old China hand publicly frowns at gory suppression of the student uprising, while privately winking at its planners. Welcoming the Soviet Union into the twentieth century, he dwells, equably and affably, in the nineteenth.

UNHOLY PROTEST

On Sunday, December 10, 1989 demonstraters surrounded New York's St. Patrick's Cathederal chanting and carrying placards: "Curb your dogma," "Condom O'Connor," "Teach safe sex," "Stop the church." The demonstration's chief sponsors were AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT-Up) and Women's Health Action and Mobilization (WHAM) who passed out flyers accusing Cardinal John O'Connor of "genocide" for opposing "education about AIDS and safe sex in public and parochial schools"; of intolerance for urging Catholics "to escalate their attacks on abortion rights and women's health care facilities"; and questioning his Christianity because he "opposes antidiscrimination leglislation that would protect the rights of lesbians and gay men." The groups summed up their argument: "The intrusion of O'Connor and the church hierarchy into politics and public health guarantees that ALL people will suffer from the murderous policies of the church."

Inside the cathedral some of their number disrupted the 10:15 Mass by lying in the aisles, by chaining themselves to the pews, by interrupting and finally bringing O'Connor's homily to a halt, by tossing condoms in the air and sticking them in Mass books, and by throwing the Communion Host to the floor. What went on in St. Patrick's was an outrage. The city's four daily papers said so, as did civic and religious leaders. The fifty-organization Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Rights—among the demonstration's cosponsors—condemned the disruption of Mass. Bishop Richard Grein of the Episcopal Diocese of New York summed up the views of many: "regardless of how we may feel about the reasons underlying the demonstrators' protest or about their right to exercise free speech, we cannot condone and must condemn this interruption of a service of worship, this denial of religious freedom."

We agree.

But there is more to say. Defenders of the demonstration isolate as excessive and unacceptable what went on in the cathedral. Nonsense. The demonstration and the desecration are of a piece. The demonstration outside was kept under control only because

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a considerable force of New York police was on duty. Like other ACT-Up efforts, the demonstration was consciously designed to be provocative and excessive. The posters and advertisements for the event, as well as the flyers distributed on Fifth Avenue and in the cathedral, were hate-filled and inflammatory; their arguments tortured and distorted. Having ourselves taken issue with the bishops' statements on public policy concerning abortion and AIDS, we detect not a protest over policy issues but a scapegoating, even demonization, of Catholicism, of the bishops, and of O'Connor in particular. People with AIDS have claims on our compassion and care—as the bishops have said repeatedly. People who feel the shadow of the disease fall directly on them may understandably strike out in frustration—whether at the government, at medical science, or at the church. When sound complaints are raised, they should be heard. But when the main result is simply a new cloud of bigotry and bitterness that will add to what already surrounds this issue, observers should say so clearly.

ELECTIONS IN CHILE

UNCERTAIN FUTURE

PINOCHET'S SHADOW REMAINS

December 14, 1989 in Santa Juana, a small town in rural Chile, was festive. The town square was full of people of all ages talking with neighbors and watching others make their way to vote for a president and Congress for the first time since the September 11, 1973 military coup that brought General Augusto Pinochet to power. Pinochet had favored Santa Juana as the site for major pronouncements and its mayor, Hernán Mosso, was known as a staunch Pinochet ally. A year ago, at the time of the October plebiscite on whether to confirm Pinochet as head of state for another nine years or call national elections, the mayor had been accused of attempting to interfere with the vote count.

This time there were accusations that the progovernment *Democracia y Progreso* forces had engaged in vote buying. In nearby towns ballots were found to lack the name of the opposition candidate for senator. Nevertheless, District 45, in which Santa Juana is located, went solidly for opposition presidential candidate Patricio Aylwin, as well as for opposition candidates for the Chamber of Deputies. It was only because of a quirk in the law that one of the two senators elected from the region was progovernment. The binominal system imposed by the Pinochet government required that for two candidates to be elected from the same list or coalition of parties, the second candidate had to have more than double the the total number of votes of the next highest coalition. Hence while Arturo Frei Bolivar of the *Concertación* was elected with 36.2 percent of the votes, the other winning candidate, Eugenio Cantuarias Lorrondo of *Democracia y Progreso* had only 15.5 percent to *PAIS* (*Partido Amplio de Izquierda Socialista*) candidate Luis Maira Aguirre's 23.1 percent. Such anomalies affected outcomes in other electoral districts as well and will continue to affect the governmental structures when the newly elected president and Congress take over in March 1990.

Among the most worrisome anomalies is that General Pinochet will continue as commander in chief of the army. As such he will be a member of the National Security Council composed of the four heads of the armed forces, the president, head of the Senate, chief justice of the Supreme Court, and the comptroller general. On some matters, this body can supersede the president and Congress. In addition, the armed forces' budget is largely exempt from executive or legislative control. In fact, the entire 1990 national budget that Patricio Aylwin will inherit from the Pinochet government cannot be modified in any way, thereby making the promised expansion of social welfare programs difficult.

Substantial changes in other vital areas will also be difficult to achieve because of restrictions imposed by the 1980 constitution and recent laws. These include the appointment of nine senators by the outgoing government. Since the opposition won only 22 of 47 Senate seats, they will have to persuade some of the center-right to vote with them. This implies some modification of the *Concertación*'s campaign promises, including making all senatorial posts elective, eliminating restrictions on political parties and movements, adding another civilian to the National Security Council and making its role strictly advisory, introducing direct election of local and regional officials, strengthening the legislative branch of government so that it is on a par with the executive, introducing presidential selection of the commander in chief of the armed forces, and strengthening human rights guarantees. Such changes, if possible at all, will depend on continuing solidarity among seventeen political parties and movements making up the *Concertación*.

To govern, Alywin will probably have not only to modify some of his programs, but also to consolidate a broad popular base. Traditionally, senators and deputies in Chile have been drawn from the elite. The newly elected Congress is no exception. Labor, students, and community activists have asserted that they continue to be treated as objects of political manipulation rather than as participants in the political process.

As one labor leader put it, politicians should remember that "workers failed to strongly protect Chilean democracy in 1973 because they didn't see it as theirs." A number of religious leaders and human rights activists take a similar stand. Monsignor Alejandro Goic, auxiliary bishop of Concepción, and Marta Werner, the director of the archdiocesan Human Rights Department, agree that the Chilean people are going to expect a greater level of incorporation into governmental decision making than in the past. Students also see themselves as critical to the consolidation of democracy. Approximately 65 percent of the population is under twenty-five years of age, and a third of all voters are under thirty. High school and university students were essential in helping Chileans register to vote and encouraging them to overcome their fear of political participation.

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Without strong support from such groups, the new government could founder on such controversial issues as how to deal with past human rights violations. Pinochet recently stated that he would not tolerate any attempt to bring to trial any member of the armed forces for such violations. Public opinion appears to be divided on the issue. One group, including some of the newly elected senators and deputies, argues that the best strategy is to forget the past in order to face the future as a united country. Others insist that ignoring violations will divide the country further and insist that investigations be undertaken in order to establish the facts. And still others go further, contending that all rights violators should be tried and, if convicted, sentenced to the maximum penalties.

The situation is complicated because a 1978 law decreed that individuals who committed criminal offenses under the state of siege between September 11, 1973 and March 10, 1978, be granted amnesty unless they were currently on trial or had been convicted previously. This covered all members of the armed forces, as well as guerrillas, most of whom had been wiped out by 1975. The law has been used by the military courts to dismiss charges involving disappearances, torture, and murder against members of the armed forces. Civil courts have no jurisdiction in such matters.

An important loophole in the law is that until the body of an individual is found the case cannot be closed. Since the remains of most of the several hundred disappeared have never been found, this leaves open the possibility of judicial action. The *Vicaría de Solidaridad* of the archbishop of Santiago, the principal defender of human rights, has prepared over ten thousand cases involving alleged violations of human rights. Lacking resources to bring all the cases to trial, the *Vicaría*'s lawyers hope to use some of them to establish legal principles and precedents. To accomplish this will require considerable cooperation on the part of the Chilean judiciary which up until the mid-1980s was generally reluctant to act in human rights cases. More recently an increasing number of judges and magistrates have expressed interest in strengthening Chilean law and judicial practice with respect to human rights. Anticipating this, Pinochet recently replaced a number of Supreme Court justices with allies.

The day after the election demonstrators, demanding the release of political prisoners and the holding of human rights trials, engaged in skirmishes with police in downtown Santiago. The next day several hundred relatives of the disappeared rallied in front of the cathedral and made the same demands. It was a sign of some change that, rather than forcibly breaking up the demonstration, the police negotiated with the demonstrators concerning which activities would be allowed.

The relatives of the disappeared assert they want justice, not vengeance. Many say they simply want to know the fate of their loved ones, where they are buried, and who was responsible for their deaths. Overall, the attitude is that establishing the truth will help heal the body politic, thereby facilitating redemocratization. Whether that will be primarily through the establishment of an investigatory commission, judicial trials, or other mechanisms remains unclear. What is obvious is that the issue cannot be swept under the rug.

Such problems tinged public celebrations after the election with worry. The campaign helped reveal the difficulties inherent in rebuilding democracy in Chile in the face of Pinochet's continued presence in government, constitutional and legal restrictions, and the survival of some traditional political elitism. While the celebrations were not euphoric, most Chileans are hopeful and focused on incorporating themselves into the process of change. Without such participation the new government will have difficulty consolidating a solid democratic base sufficient to transcend difficulties.

Only by expanding effective popular participation will Chilean democracy survive over the long term. And only in that fashion will the hopes of those who overcame their fear and voted be realized.

MARGARET E. CRAHAN

Margaret E. Crahan, Luce Professor of Religion, Power, and Political Process at Occidental College in Los Angeles, California, observed the 1988 Chilean plebiscite and 1989 national elections for an international body that specializes in monitoring electoral processes.

SWISS REFERENDUM

CHAMPAGNE FOR THE LOSERS

ARMY ON THE DEFENSIVE

In Commonweal*'s issue of June 2, 1989, Adolph Schalk reported on the unprecedented and controversial Swiss initiative to abolish their army. In a national referendum on November 26 the Swiss electorate defeated the initiative. The author comments:*

It was hard to believe one's eyes on election night. Telecasts showed backers of the defeated initiative exuberantly emptying champagne bottles, while their victorious opponents came across as disgruntled sourpusses. Goliath didn't topple from GSoA (Group for a Switzerland without an Army)'s slingshot, but he is still reeling from the impact of the referendum. After years of voter apathy, this emotionally-charged issue brought 68.6 percent of the electorate to the polls, the third largest turnout in this century.

Army proponents were dismayed that a spectacular 35.6 percent of the the voters said "yes" to the initiative. It was far more than had been predicted by most opinion polls, and it was achieved in the face of determined opposition by most Swiss, the government, most political parties, and despite a deep-rooted tradition of armed neutrality. The tally—1,052,218 "yes" votes against 1,903,797 "no's" (64.4 percent)—has forced the army into a defensive position.

Most cities (Zürich, 38.8 percent) showed even higher percentages in favor of the initiative. The two French-speaking cantons of Geneva and Jura adopted the initiative outright. Further election analyses showed that more men than women favored dismantling the army, as did voters with a higher education.

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The majority of voters between twenty and forty-four—i.e., those now serving in the armed forces—decidedly favored the initiative while seniors predominantly rejected it.

Canton Uri, with the nation's most strategic army installations (Gotthard Massif) and vitally dependent on army-related industry, voted 76.1 percent against. People who live near shooting ranges, military airports, and maneuver areas voted strongly in favor of the initiative. Army proponents allege that many voters were not really against the army, but supported the initiative "to teach the army a lesson," i.e., to force reforms and drastic reductions in military expenditures. Many media commentators believe the sensational developments in Berlin and Eastern Europe influenced the result.

The "victorious defeat" is all the more surprising inasmuch as the army opponents only three years ago received a mere 13 percent support in opinion polls; they were treated as social outcasts by the populace and silenced into oblivion by the media. In spite of mudslinging on both sides, occasional displays of naiveté, arrogance, and incompetence by GSoA adherents in TV and radio debates, they have emerged from the campaign as respected and serious contenders.

From the outset backers of GSoA had no illusions that they would win. Now as then, they see the election as only a phase of a continuing educational process of awakening the Swiss people to a new consciousness and of creating an internationally-minded, peace-oriented society. In their eyes, the Swiss army is obsolete. In a European war it would be no match against technologically superior opponents. Moreover, Swiss neutrality is making less and less sense in a time when pollution, drugs, AIDS, crime, poverty, hunger, terrorism require international collaboration. The billions spent on defense should be diverted to these problems.

The GSoA's moral victory gives rise to high hopes: alternative civilian service (instead of prison) for conscientious objectors; tighter restrictions against arms exports; drastic cuts in military outlays. Even before election day the defense department reduced the discharge age from 50 to 42, the peacetime strength from 500,000 to 400,000, and plans further reductions. It sent army medical teams and election observers to Namibia. Non-member Switzerland may even send soldiers to serve in the UN's Blue Helmet Peace Corps.

But the army's backers will hardly forfeit their essential trumps. Ignoring the GSoA's moral mandate, parliament has already approved a record military budget of $3 billion. Meanwhile, the GSoA is at the ready to launch a new petition for abolishing the army, if this proves necessary. ADOLPH SCHALK

Adolph Schalk is an American freelance writer, long resident in Switzerland.

WORLD WATCH

J. Bryan Hehir

INTERDEPENDENCE FOR ALL

A DECADE TO REMAKE THE WORLD

It is clear that we face an enormous but positive challenge in the 1990s. The coming decade will be transitional not only in the sense that it takes us into the next century, but in the deeper sense that fundamental adjustments must be made in the international order. The foreign policy questions facing the United States, conceptually and operationally, will be as profound and as potentially fruitful as in any period since the end of World War II.

On this point there is little dissent. The daily news from Berlin, Budapest, and Bratislava convince even the most skeptical that the structure and substance of the cold war are rapidly being transformed. This is the conclusion most commonly drawn from the Malta summit. There is room for much debate, however, about the nature, complexity, and range of choices facing the West in the decade ahead. Reshaping an international order which has been in place for four decades is not a task with clear lines of demarcation. The riveting spectacle of thousands of East Germans flowing into West Berlin has understandably focused Western attention on "the German question," "the European house," and the changing shape of the Soviet Union. But events at the end of 1989 point toward the need for a broader framework for assessing the political and moral problems of the coming decade of transition in world affairs.

While Eastern Europe is peacefully passing through revolution, other regions are mired in mortal conflict. The very week that Lech Walesa was recounting to rapt American audiences how the transition from communism to pluralism was being accomplished without breaking a windowpane, news came that six Jesuits had been brutally massacred in San Salvador. Within a week the newly elected president of Lebanon, Rene Moawad, was assassinated in Beirut. El Salvador and Lebanon forcefully reminded the world that peaceful change is not the inevitable pattern of world politics. For some places the future promises neither peace nor change.

It is this conjunction of stunning peaceful possibilities in the traditional theater of the cold war and starkly murderous realities in the micropolitics of national and regional conflict that poses a basic political-moral challenge for the coming decade of transition. Unless there is a dramatic and disastrous change of course in East-West pol-

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itics, it is reasonable to predict a decade which will be intellectually, politically, and economically complicated but also a time of hope, expectation, and constructive cooperation. Such cooperation would be a political and moral good of a high order and should be pursued and encouraged by all parties. A decisive move away from cold-war politics cannot but enhance the quality of international life. But the conditions of local, national, and regional politics which have produced the Lebanese and Central American conflicts will not yield quickly even to the most optimistic developments in superpower and/or European relations. At Malta it was clear that Central America was the one divisive issue of the summit.

How should this relationship of the new possibilities at the macrolevel of East-West relations and continuing chaos and conflict at the microlevel of intrastate and regional conflicts be conceived? First, the good news: throughout the cold war superpower competition has usually intensified and complicated local conflicts. The engagement of one or both powers in third-world countries has escalated the military capacities of local actors, engaged the prestige of the big powers, and made diplomatic resolution of issues more difficult. The dangerous and dreary pattern has reached from Vietnam to Afghanistan to Central America and the Horn of Africa. A new chapter in East-West relations at least holds out the possibility that in the future the superpowers can be restrained from aggravating local conflicts.

Second, a troubling possibility: the potential for change in the superpower relationship, in the European theater, and in the German question is so broad and historically significant that these issues may simply absorb the interest, energy, and resources of international politics in the coming decade. The prospect envisioned here is a split-level international order: planned and controlled change in East-West relations and chaos and conflict in vast sectors of the Southern hemisphere. If the major powers—principally but not exclusively the superpowers—no longer see competitive advantage in the developing countries, the troubling possibility is that they will simply disengage: isolate the poverty, the debt, the violent struggles of the third world and insulate "northern politics" (of East or West) from "southern connections." It is true that disengagement is better for the South than a continued pattern of superpower intervention and manipulation, but the question which needs to be pressed is whether these alternatives are the only options for the future.

In response to this question, a proposal: the change in East-West relations requires nothing less than refashioniong the international system, politically, economically, and strategically. Anything short of this goal will fail to grasp the potential of the moment. But the conception of a new order will have to include specific attention focused on the immediate needs and the future development of "the Lebanons and El Salvadors" of the world. To shape a system that simply ignores or isolates these problems is both morally and politically unacceptable.

There is no expectation here that the reshaping of the international system will begin with local or regional conflicts. The promise of the future works the other way: better relations at the top of the international system open the way for a changed relationship to other levels of the system. To argue against big-power disengagement from smaller nations is to call for a quite different style of engagement than we have known in the last forty years. The Western powers clearly have more resources to offer the South than do the Soviets. But a different relationship to the Soviets calls for redefining Western concepts of interest and responsibility in the developing world.

A new pattern of order which combines nonintervention with engagement is needed. Such a conception can be described in terms of its goals but not yet in terms of its means. It will require diplomatic interest by the big powers of the East and West but not military forces. It will require Western plans to relieve the debt of developing countries, but not to forsake future lending for development.The new order should not be a world in which the East and West are so fixated on their possibilities for engagement with each other that they define the future only in terms of those legitimate but limited interests. The shared conception of interdependence that lies at the root of changing East-West relations needs to be extended to the Lebanons and El Salvadors of the international system. Human life, human dignity, and human rights must flourish there also. □

OF SEVERAL MINDS David R. Carlin, Jr.

IF NOTHING IS KNOWABLE...

WHY BOTHER WITH EDUCATION?

Have we ceased to believe in the possibility of knowledge? Is that why we can't remember when Columbus discovered America?

When we concern ourselves—as President Bush (our "education president") and other political and corporate leaders urge us to do—with the sorry state of American education, it is well that we ask if teachers are paid enough, if students are assigned enough homework, if enough money is put into Head Start, if enough effort and imagination are put into dropout prevention projects, etc.

But from time to time we ought to step back from the everyday business of school policy and practice to ask if our civilization still believes that the universe is more or less intelligible and that the ordinary human mind is capable—at least when properly trained—of grasping that intelligibility, of seeing into the nature of things.

For if we believe that the universe is in principle unknowable; or if we believe that the human mind is so weak and disproportionate an instrument that it cannot understand reality; or if we believe that the nature of things can be understood only

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in small fragments: if we believe any of these things, then it is unlikely education will thrive, no matter how good a job we do with teacher pay, homework, Head Start, and the rest.

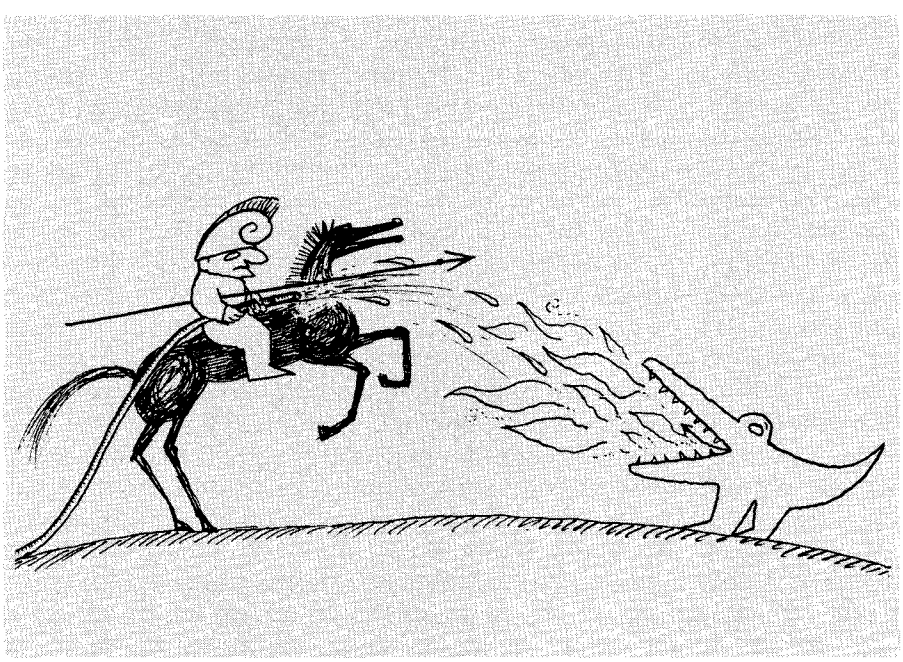
Education is about knowledge, which is a relationship between reality and the mind. Thus, if we are skeptical about either reality or the mind or both, then we are skeptical about the possibility of knowledge—hence about the possibility of education.

Imagine a town in which the citizens have gradually come to believe that it is impossible to extinguish big fires. Several centuries back one of the local firefighters wrote a very fine book proving that big fires could not be put out, no matter how tall the ladders, how long the hoses, or how great the water pressure. Yet at the same time great progress was made in fighting small fires, until today there is a highly elaborated science of fighting small fires, which science, however, only a small number of gifted persons can master, and that only after many years of training. The citizens have long since grown cheerfully accustomed to the fact that their town is constantly in flames, though of late they have shown much concern that their young people seem to know little and care less about firefighting.

Modern natural science (which, for the sake of having a convenient starting date, we may say begins during the lifetime of Galileo) is probably the greatest intellectual accomplishment in the history of the human race. That much I grant.

But every good thing has its down side. In the case of natural science, there are three facets to the down side. First, its prestige has been so great that it has tended to drive all other claimants to the title of knowledge from the field. Natural science is seen as knowledge par excellence; philosophy, literature, and the arts are seen as second-rate knowledge at best, at worst as the expression of mere personal fantasies; while moral knowledge isn't knowledge at all, but simply a set of informal rules that decent people agree on. As for the social sciences: insofar as they mimic the methods of natural science we have hopes that they may someday produce a considerable body of scientific knowledge; but we have been nursing those hopes for a century-and-a-half now, and to date have little to show for it. As for history— forget it. It tells entertaining stories but isn't the least bit scientific.

Second, natural science is the province of specialists, who comprise only a small fraction of the total population. Once upon a time it was believed that every educated person would eventually acquire a general knowledge of the entire field of natural science. This was the hope of the Encyclopedists in the eighteenth century, a hope embraced and propagated by Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, John Dewey, and a host of lesser but similar lights in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But things didn't work out that way. The typical college-educated American of today is far from believing that he or she ought to have a general knowledge of the natural sciences. Science, we believe, is for the scientists, just as dentistry is for the dentist, auto mechanics for the auto mechanic, and tax collecting for the tax collector. There are some things the average person is expected to know (e.g., where the earthquake struck and what happened to Jane Pauley), but science isn't one of them.



Third, natural science, marvelous though it is, makes no claim to deal with any more than an important but limited aspect of reality. It talks of how things appear to a human observer, not of how they are in themselves. It has nothing to say about fundamental questions of value, about the meaning of life and death, about God.

Little wonder, then, that it is difficult to inspire our young people with enthusiasm for knowledge. If natural science alone is real knowledge, if this knowledge has nothing to say about most of the great questions that trouble human beings, and if this knowledge is in practice available to only a small and highly trained fraction of the population, then there is nothing astonishing in the fact that our generation of students is indifferent to the pursuit of truth. Their indifference is a logically appropriate conclusion to be drawn from the theory of knowledge that has gradually come to pervade our culture.

I shall be told that my observations are little more than a counsel of educational despair. Perhaps they are. If we can improve education by paying teachers more, by assigning more homework, etc., then there is hope, there is light at the end of a not very lengthy tunnel. But if our difficulty is that we have a faulty theory of knowledge that has been gaining ground steadily for the past four hundred years; or if, worse still, we have a theory of knowledge that is sound, not faulty at all, yet is unconducive to inspiring any but a handful with a zeal for knowledge, then it is difficult to find grounds for cheer.

At all events, you will understand why I believe that the current national debate on quality education does not even come near to dealing with the real issue. □

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SEMANTICS & STYLE IN AN ABORTION CAMPAIGN

DEFINING THE ISSUE IN NEW JERSEY

MARY C. SEGERS

Last July the Supreme Court inaugurated a new era in abortion politics. In upholding a Missouri statute restricting abortion (*Webster* v. *Reproductive Health Services*, July 1989), the Court signaled a shift in the debate from national to state politics, from courtrooms to legislatures, and from judicial appointments to election campaigns. Generalizations about patterns of response to *Webster* among the fifty states are premature, but a careful look at New Jersey, one of the few that had statewide elections in 1989, may provide some early clues to the nature of post-*Webster* abortion politics.

Political analysts usually watch New Jersey as a "swing state" in presidential elections and regard it as a barometer of the mood of the national electorate. Jersey voters are independent-minded: its two U.S. senators are Democrats, but it went Republican in the last three presidential elections and has had a liberal Republican, Thomas Kean, as governor through the 1980s. Jerseyans also have a strong penchant for home rule and local control. The Garden State is of particular interest because Catholics are the largest single religious group in the state: 41 percent (3,160,054) out of a population of 7.5 million. It is also one of a handful of states continuing Medicaid funding of abortions—this as the result of a 1982 State Supreme Court decision. Opinion polls show the state to be largely prochoice. When asked by pollsters (Do you agree or disagree that the decision to have an abortion is a private matter that should be left to the woman to decide without government interference?) in March 1989 and again in September, a large majority of New Jerseyans (80 percent and 77 percent) agreed that the abortion decision should be left to the woman. A *Star Ledger*/Eagleton poll also showed that a large majority of Catholics (73 percent) and of Protestants (78 percent) agreed that the abortion decision is a private matter.

Catholics are virtually indistinguishable from Protestants in supporting legal abortion during the first trimester in cases of rape and incest, fetal deformity, and when a woman's physical health is endangered. A majority of Catholics also approve of legal abortion in the first three months if the woman is under 18 (52 percent; Protestants 61 percent); and if the woman feels she cannot afford a child (52 percent; Protestants 55 percent). However, Catholics differ from other New Jerseyans in the case of a woman's desire not to have a baby. Whereas a majority (53 percent) of all voters approve of legal abortion in this case, Catholics are evenly divided between those who oppose and those who approve (47 percent; Protestants 61 percent). The Eagleton poll also found some differences in intensity of conviction between Catholics and Protestants, and this is undoubtedly a reflection of the ambivalence Catholics often feel about the issue. (The *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton polls are conducted by Rutgers University's Eagleton Institute of Politics and the Newark *Star-Ledger*, the state's largest newspaper.)

In the November gubernatorial election, Democratic Congressman James J. Florio defeated Republican Congressman Jim Courter for the governor's seat. The Democrats also gained control of the state assembly, winning 44 seats to the Republicans' 36. Since the Democrats already control the senate, which was not up for election in 1989, the gubernatorial and assembly elections put them in control of state government.

How important was the abortion question in this election? Auto insurance rates—New Jersey has the highest in the nation—mattered most (32 percent) to the 1,653 voters who participated in a *New York Times*/CBS exit poll; abortion was second, along with the environment (22 percent). The poll also showed a close relation between how people felt about abortion and how they voted. The front-runner Jim Florio campaigned throughout as a prochoice candidate; he declared immediately after *Webster* that, as governor, he would veto any legislation to restrict abortion. Jim Courter has long opposed abortion: he signed a congressional amicus brief in the *Webster* case asking the Court to reverse *Roe* v. *Wade*. After *Webster*, he voted last August against Medicaid funding of abortions in Washington, D.C. During the campaign, however, Courter, aware of opinion polls showing the prochoice tendencies of New Jerseyans, tried to soften his stand by saying that, as governor, he would not propose restrictive legislation. According to the exit poll, of those who support easy access to abortion, 68 percent voted for Florio; of those who want to tighten the rules, 54 percent;

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and of those who want to ban abortion, 47 percent. Overall, Florio took 63 percent to Courter's 37 percent.

Though there was a difference of twenty-six percentage points, and though the candidates were treated in the press as representing clear-cut choices on abortion, there are different interpretations of the significance of the abortion issue in the outcome. Prochoice leaders say the New Jersey race shows that the right to choose is a pivotal voting issue and that prolife officials and candidates are out of touch with public opinion. Prolife leaders, on the other hand, do not see the gubernatorial race as a referendum on the abortion issue because Courter softened his opposition to abortion and confused voters about his position. In addition, prolife leaders say that they re-elected eleven prolife incumbent assemblymembers in the face of vigorous prochoice efforts to unseat them. No surprise that prochoice leaders emphasize the importance of the abortion issue; the man who held their views won. No surprise prolife leaders minimize the issue; their man waffled.

Debra Dodson, a political scientist with the Eagleton Institute's Center for American Women and Politics, thinks the abortion issue affected the election in three ways. It mobilized activists and volunteers; it shaped the way the candidates ran their campaigns; and finally it influenced the vote itself. In her analysis, Florio's prochoice position helped add several points to his victory margin while Courter's ever-changing position on abortion policy diverted attention from his stand on other issues and made it difficult for him to close the gap with Florio. In a postmortem on the election, Ken Connolly, Courter's campaign manager, conceded the campaign was dominated by the abortion issue to the detriment of his candidate.

The role of abortion in the assembly races is far more complex and harder to sort out. Incumbency is usually the single most significant factor in the outcome of state legislative contests: many voters are not particularly interested in these races (many do not even know the names of their assemblymembers, much less those of their opponents), and the media rarely pay attention to them. The result is that incumbents usually win. This is especially true in New Jersey, where many representatives come from one-party communities. But in this election there was a shift: the current assembly has a two-seat Republican majority (41); in the new assembly the Democrats will have an eight-seat majority (44 seats to the Republicans' 36). Obviously some incumbents lost. Was it over the abortion issue? That is hard to know. In the current assembly, the legislators' positions on abortion have not been along party lines; furthermore, no legislator's position has been tested by a vote since 1982, when the last abortion bill came before them.

Once again prochoice and prolife advocates have differing interpretations. Fran Avallone, state coordinator of Right to Choose, points out that 6 of the 46 assembly candidates (there were 160 all together) endorsed by the New Jersey Pro-Life Pac rejected that endorsement. She also says that in the course of the campaign 4 others clarified their position in a prochoice direction. In addition, 3 prochoice Democrats were first-time winners. Prochoice advocates now estimate 40 or 41 members on their side in the new assembly in contrast to 27 in the current one. Thirty members of the new assembly are counted prolife and there is insufficient information to categorize the other 9 or 10.

Rita Martin, prolife director for the Diocese of Metuchen and former president of the New Jersey Right to Life Committee, says prolife groups are also pleased with the assembly election because only 70 percent of the Choice-Pac's 67 endorsed candidates won and because choice candidates in targeted districts were defeated by prolife candidates. She acknowledges, however, the basic shift: the current assembly had a prolife *majority*, while the new assembly has only a prolife *bloc*. She concedes that "the new assembly is not as good as we want or as good as the old one."

Events since the election confirm the new assembly's alignment. Barely two weeks after election day, a prolife assembly member introduced a parental notification bill in the lame-duck assembly. Prolife advocates hope to get the bill through the legislature and send it to Governor Kean before the legislative term ends in early January. Kean has expressed reservations about the wording of the bill. Prolife advocates judge that chances of passage are better with the current assembly than the new one. But even with a prochoice governor and state legislature, prolife legislators and activists will continue to press for restrictions, and presumably they will also be working in 1991 to gain control of both houses of the legislature and again in 1993 when governor and assembly are up for reelection.

What does the New Jersey election show about post-*Webster* politics? First, there was a strong resurgence of a broad-based prochoice movement which seemed to have caught the right to life movement unprepared. Second, the prochoice position seems to have wide political appeal.

The first lesson of the New Jersey campaign is the political power of women (and men) who are willing and able to translate strong convictions about the abortion issue into effective political organizing. Many defined that issue not around the morality of abortion per se, but around a woman's right to decide whether or not to carry a pregnancy to term. New Jersey prochoicers seemed able to draw on a broad range of people concerned that *Roe* might be reversed, mobilizing across class, race, gender, and party lines. They organized Choice-New Jersey, a coalition of thirty-five groups, which coordinated statewide efforts to inform voters of the candidates' positions on abortion policy. Choice-Pac focused on the assembly race and raised $200,000 in four months in order to run voter-identification projects in selected districts ($183,000 was raised in-state). State branches of the National Organization for Women (NOW) and the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) focused on the race for governor. Other women worked in Democratic party committees as well as in organizations, such as the Women's Agenda, New Jersey Right to Choose, and the state chapter of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights (RCAR).

Who were these women? They were churchwomen, community leaders, local volunteers. They included members of groups such as the League of Women Voters, Soroptimists, PTA,

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YWCA, the Junior League, business and professional women's clubs, and chapters of the American Association of University Women. They were Democrats and Republicans, working women, grandmothers, mothers, and daughters—the kind of civic-minded women who sit on school boards, participate in local government, and keep New Jersey's small communities going. If the New Jersey experience is any indication, prochoice organizations can call on a broad range of men and women who are not activists or extremists on the issue, but who have reached the conviction that decisionmaking about abortion should be left to individual women.

New Jersey prolife forces also drew volunteers from a coalition of twenty groups, including New Jersey Right to Life Committee, Eagle Forum, Knights of Columbus, Christian Action Council, Concerned Women of America, and Citizens Concerned for Life. A Pro-Life Pac was formed fourteen years ago and its county-by-county organization of phone banks and volunteers has been in place for some time. Pro-Life Pac raised $20,000 (of which $10,000 came from the National Right to Life Committee). Pro-Life Pac originally endorsed 54 assembly candidates, then revised that downward to 46 as some candidates began to back away from a prolife position. Of their 46 endorsees, 34 won and another 6 rejected the prolife endorsement. According to Connie Butcavage, president of the Pac, prolife forces "won at the ballot box" in the assembly races but lost in the pre-election jockeying for identification as prochoice or prolife. It appears that a well-organized prolife movement was overtaken by the protest reaction against *Webster* that swept the state and brought about a resurgence of prochoice activism.

The second lesson springs from the first: the prochoice position has strong political appeal when it is framed as preserving a woman's right to choose. A typical example of this approach can be found in the newsletter of the Women's Agenda. Working from a 1981 League of Women Voters' statewide survey, Roberta Francis, former director for women's issues of the League, drew a sharp distinction between the legality and morality of abortion. The public policy issue was defined as choice, and nothing else. Arguing that it was possible to be anti-abortion and prochoice, the Women's Agenda focused the basic issue on whether the government or a woman should decide to continue or terminate a pregnancy. By framing the issue in this way and labeling their opponents antichoice (not prolife), the prochoicers made the

Lining up the people in the pews

Catholic prolife commissions also worked to influence Catholic voters during the New Jersey campaign. On Respect Life Sunday (October 1, 1989), Catholics in the Archdiocese of Newark and the Dioceses of Trenton and Metuchen were asked during Mass to sign pledge cards authorizing the prolife commissions to use the resulting list of names (called a "Life Roll") in lobbying for prolife legislation. Parishioners were asked to indicate whether they would write or visit their elected representatives, join a prolife prayer group, or help in some other way. This appeal was made during the time usually reserved for the homily. The appeal to sign was preceded by a statement from the archbishop which said: "Legislators who are personally opposed to abortion but who do nothing to back up that position are looking for votes among the living without counting the cost of the innocent dead. The love of Jesus celebrated in this Eucharist impels us to form our consciences and to act upon them in the voting booth. We have a duty to vote and a duty before God to uphold our moral position with our vote." (The Life Roll was taken in the Camden diocese during 1988 and is planned for the Paterson diocese in 1990.)

In my parish, 679 individuals (out of 2,500 families) signed up. What happened elsewhere? An informal survey among friends and colleagues garnered the following. Some parishes did not distribute the cards. Some Catholics objected verbally and in writing that Project Life Roll came dangerously close to church endorsement of Republican candidates. In one parish, a priest preached a sermon on God's compassionate love and said he could never judge the decision of a woman who had had an abortion; at the end of that Mass, the pastor announced that prolife parishioners had cards at the back of the church if anyone was interested. In still another parish, the priest read the archbishop's statement, gave a homily urging parishioners to enroll, then sat silently for ten minutes waiting for people to sign up.

According to Rita Martin, prolife director for the Metuchen diocese, all together 225,000 New Jersey Catholics (roughly 7 percent) signed up for Project Life Roll. The computerized list made from the cards will be used to lobby legislators and candidates for office and to demonstrate Catholic support for prolife legislation.

My own thoughts took me back to the days of the Legion of Decency when Catholics were asked to stand at Mass and pledge to observe the Legion's movie ratings. The coercion of such a tactic and the inevitable hypocrisy that followed it reminded me that the issue of the prolife roll goes beyond the obvious questions of separation of church and state or the proper relations between religion and politics in a pluralistic society; at bottom it is a question of ecclesiology.

Although prochoice Catholic politicians were not denied the Eucharist (as happened in one case in California) and the New Jersey bishops were careful that parish priests and prolife commissions observed the letter of the law by not endorsing or criticizing candidates from the pulpit, the appearance of partisanship at Mass politicizes the liturgy and coerces conscience. The use of the liturgy to mobilize prolife volunteers during an election campaign is imprudent and inadvisable.

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right to decide the moderate, mainstream position in the New Jersey elections.

Why did Jersey voters—or at least a majority of those who went to the polls—accept this semantic framework? Perhaps because they essentially agreed with it. And in this, they may differ with the views of their fellow Americans. National polls show that between the polar extremes of pro-abortion and anti-abortion, there is a large group of Americans who are against abortion on demand and who favor some but not all restrictions on abortion. A *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton poll shows that Jerseyans diverge from national polls in significant respects. Close to a majority, 48 percent, said women should have the right to abortion in all circumstances; another 44 percent said abortion should be allowed in certain circumstances; only 5 percent said abortion should not be allowed in any circumstances. Among New Jersey Catholics, the figures were 43 percent, 47 percent, and 6 percent. The contrasting national figures (*Boston Globe*/WBZ-TV poll, March 1989) are respectively 25 percent; 53 percent, and 19 percent. Janice Ballou, director of the *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton poll, emphasized how much New Jerseyans differed from the nation on this point: "Compared to national polls that show less than 3-in-10 Americans support legal abortion in any circumstances, this state has close to a majority who favor this position."

Several factors might explain why New Jerseyans are likely to land on the prochoice side when it comes to abortion policy. Even more than other Americans, they are ambivalent about the role of government. A significant number favor less government intervention in economic matters and personal lifestyle issues, but more government assistance to solve crime, drug, and environmental problems. It is no accident that the Libertarian party is relatively strong in the state and regularly fields candidates in statewide elections. Perhaps the citizens of this most densely populated state in the nation are especially sensitive to issues of privacy—the kind of zonal privacy that the Supreme Court cited in *Roe* v. *Wade* to shield a woman's sexual and reproductive life from public intervention and scrutiny. Operation Rescue, which has been active in the state, may have sensitized voters to the burdens to women that would follow upon restrictive legislation.

To summarize, the New Jersey election experience suggests that "respect-for-a-woman's-right-to-decide-free–from-government-interference" has the potential for evoking consensus on this issue as much as, if not more than, the "against-abortion-on-demand" stance. This is a new development in abortion politics. Moreover, the *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton poll data indicate that, at least in New Jersey, those who favor some restrictions on abortion are more likely to support a woman's right to decide than to support or vote for candidates who want to ban abortions completely. Finally, the New Jersey experience suggests that the common prolife characterization of the opposition as "radical feminists"—narrow, class-based, and extremist—is clearly erroneous and should be revised. □

PLAYING FOR TIME IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SHAMIR WANTS TO WAIT SOME MORE

J.J. GOLDBERG

Medieval Jewish legend tells of a magical river, somewhere far away, known as Sambatyon. On its shores the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel wait in exile for the day of messianic redemption. They cannot cross over because the river spews rocks into the air in a constant, deadly hail. Only on the Sabbath does the river relent; but on that day the devout exiles are forbidden to travel. And so they wait in the land beyond the Sambatyon, able to see their salvation across the river, but unable to reach it.

The Middle East has come of late to resemble the land of Sambatyon. A settlement to the bloody, century-old Israel-Palestine conflict is slowly coming into hazy focus. Both sides are desperately tired of Israel's twenty-two-year military rule in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Much of Israel's leadership accepts that the Arabs in the occupied territories must eventually have some substantial form of self-rule. The Palestinians' top leaders admit that, given Israel's deep-rooted insecurity, their sovereignty will be a good deal less than complete. With enough good will, a middle ground could be found. The problem is that no one seems to know how to get there.

Good will is in short supply in the Middle East. Palestinians under occupation won't even discuss their fate with Israel, insisting it talk to the Tunis-based Palestine Liberation Organization. Israel won't talk to the PLO, viewing it as a terrorist band bent on Israel's destruction. The PLO says the Palestinian uprising, now in its twenty-sixth month, has proven the Palestinians' readiness for coexistence. Israelis say it looks like just another round of violence. And so on.

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"We don't trust each other," says Moshe Amirav, director the Tel Aviv-based Council for Peace and Security. "I know the Arabs have dreams of Haifa and Jaffa, and they know that I have dreams of Hebron and Nablus."

Amirav should know. He is a former member of the central committee of the irredentist Herut movement, the dominant wing of Yitzhak Shamir's hardline Likud party. Today he heads a council of 300 senior reserve officers and defense experts who believe Israel should trade land for peace.

Two years ago, Amirav held a series of secret meetings with Faisal Husseini, the acknowledged leader of West Bank Arab nationalism. Seeking a formula for coexistence, the two men came up with a document that reportedly called for the creation of a demilitarized Palestinian state in most of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, linked by confederation to King Hussein's Jordan. Israel would retain substantial security prerogatives in the new statelet, such as electronic listening posts throughout its territory, troops along the Jordan River to monitor arms movement, and the right of hot pursuit across the border.

Amirav says the document was sent to Shamir and Yasir Arafat. Arafat approved it, he says, but Shamir rejected it. Shamir's aides deny he ever saw it. In any case, once the Amirav-Husseini meetings became public Amirav was expelled from the Herut governing body. Soon afterward he quit the party. Party leaders denounced him as a traitor. Amirav, however, is convinced there are changes brewing below the party's surface.

Herut was once a marginal phenomenon on Israel's far right. Founded in 1949 by Menachem Begin, it sees the Greater Land of Israel as indivisible and Israel's by birthright. Its emblem is a map of historic Palestine (including what is now Jordan) superimposed with a rifle in a clenched fist and the slogan, "Only thus." The late David Ben-Gurion of Labor, Israel's first prime minister, viewed Herut as just short of fascist; throughout his career he said he would share power with "anyone but Herut and the Communists." But during the 1950s and 1960s, the Polish-born Begin became the charismatic voice of Israel's growing Sephardic Jewish underclass, and his influence grew with them.

The real change began in April 1974. A judicial commission of inquiry, probing Israel's close call in the Yom Kippur War of the previous October, charged Golda Meir's Labor government with falling asleep on the job. Labor's founding generation retired, giving way to a colorless succession under Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres. Within three years the new Labor had bungled its way out of voter favor. In May 1977, Menachem Begin entered the prime minister's office.

Herut, leading the Likud bloc of rightist parties, has dominated Israeli life ever since. Under Begin and then Shamir, it has pursued a single-minded policy to preserve Israeli control over the biblical Judea and Samaria. This has not been easy. Repeated opinion polls show that a plurality of Israelis would not mind trading the territories for peace, as Labor advocates. The Likud has countered with an equation to show that land-for-peace is a slippery slope. It goes like this: Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank would lead to the formation of a Palestinian state, which would be dominated by the Palestine Liberation Organization, which is committed to Israel's destruction.

The simple equation has kept the Likud in power, but it is wearing thin. Just over a year ago, in November 1988, the PLO voted in Algiers to accept Israel's right to exist. Polls show that most Israelis don't believe the PLO was sincere, but a slim majority wouldn't mind sitting down to talk about it. "Fifty-four percent of Israeli Jews now want a dialogue with the PLO," the left-wing Knesset member Yossi Sarid said a few months after the Algiers vote. "But it is also true that 90 percent of Jews in Israel do not trust the PLO. The PLO must search its soul. Why is it seen as evasive, dodging, fickle, and double-dealing?"

The PLO was founded in Cairo in 1964, announcing itself to the world in a Palestine National Covenant that declared: "Palestine is indivisible." The organization's goal was "to liberate all of Palestine" and "purge the Zionist presence." An amendment in 1968, the year Yasir Arafat's Fatah guerrilla group took control, declared that "armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine."

The organization developed a unique approach to "armed struggle," launching actions against uninvolved civilians, air travelers, Olympic athletes, babies. Israelis came to view the PLO with utter revulsion.

The change in the PLO, like the rise of the Likud, dates back to early 1974. The catalyst again was the lesson of the Yom Kippur War: even with everything going for them, the Arabs could not defeat Israel. The Jewish state was a fact. That June, Arafat convened his governing Palestine National Council in Cario and pushed through a new program. Henceforth, the PLO would seek to establish Palestinian sovereignty on any piece of land "liberated" from Zionism, and use that as a staging ground for complete liberation. The council also voted to launch diplomatic efforts alongside the "armed struggle."

The change, in truth, was meaningless to Israelis. The PLO had simply replaced a one-stage plan for their liquidation with a two-stage plan. Terrorism continued. Nor was the covenant amended.

To hardliners in the PLO, though, the change was clear. Arafat had abandoned two key articles of the covenant, the indivisibility of Palestine and the exclusivity of armed struggle. One Fatah activist, Sabri al-Banna, seceded from the PLO and declared war on Arafat under the code name Abu Nidal. Arafat named a series of aides to reach out to Israelis, and each was gunned down.

Most Israelis believe Arafat's acceptance of the two-stage plan was purely tactical. But it represented a strategic victory for one small PLO faction, Nayef Hawatmeh's Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which since 1970 had called for recognition of Israeli national rights. With the adoption of the two-stage plan, the Democratic Front was transformed from a fringe group into a junior partner in the PLO leadership. "Cairo 1974 represented our first breakthrough," says one longtime Front activist. "It led directly to Algiers 1988. You have to understand 1974 to understand 1988."

Ironically, the Democratic Front is also one of the bloodiest terror factions under the PLO umbrella, responsible for some

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of the most horrific acts of PLO carnage. In the Middle East, "dove" and "hawk" are slippery concepts. There are dove-hawks who abhor violence, preferring gentler means to their goals; but they set goals that all but ensure endless conflict. Then there are hawk-doves who will do anything it takes to get their way; but their goal is to meet the other side halfway.

Yitzhak Rabin is Israel's best-known hawk-dove. As defense minister, it is his job to maintain order in the occupied territories, an overwhelming task in the last two years. Last December 7 marked the second anniversary of the Palestinian uprising.

The *intifada*, Arabic for "shaking off," began with a traffic accident. Four Arabs were killed by a careless Jewish driver in the Gaza Strip. The deaths touched off rioting, which quickly spread throughout the territories. Within a week the riots settled into a routine of mass demonstrations, strikes, stone-throwing, Molotov cocktails. A secret Unified Command of the Uprising, led by PLO activists, set about creating an "alternative Palestinian society." Underground schools, social services, and clinics were formed. The Palestinians announced they were "shaking off" their occupiers.

Rabin ordered his troops to crack down hard on the unrest. As the legal occupying authority, he said, it was Israel's duty to maintain order. The crackdown, flashed by television cameras to audiences around the world, has done incalculable damage to Israel's image.

At the same time, though, Rabin the Laborite has infuriated his Likud coalition partners by insisting there is "no military solution to the *intifada*. What we are facing is a popular national uprising, and bullets cannot put it down. The only solution is a political settlement that will respond to the national aspirations of the Palestinians."

Rabin is a firm believer in his party's land-for-peace formula, although, like his fellow Laborite, Shimon Peres, he would like to entrust the territories to the steady hand of Jordan's Hussein. Both Labor leaders have repeatedly met in secret with Hussein to discuss a trade. For years, Hussein replied that in order to survive Arab anger over a peace treaty, should he sign one, he had to get back every inch of the West Bank, especially East Jerusalem. This the Laborites could never promise.

In 1984, while Peres was prime minister in a Labor-Likud unity coalition, he and Hussein cooked up a new twist: Hussein could accept a less-than-total Israeli withdrawal, if the settlement were sponsored by the world community under the "umbrella" of a UN-sponsored international conference on Middle East peace. After running the idea past the Americans, the Soviets, and Arafat, Peres and Hussein met in a British hotel in April 1985 and initialed what has since been called the London Agreement: international conference, treaty, Israeli withdrawal, return of Jordanian rule to the territories with tacit PLO blessings.

The only party that refused to sign on was Shamir's Likud. Shamir denounced the London Agreement as a "suicide pact." An international conference, he said, would gang up on Israel and force the Jewish state to accept its own dismantlement. Peres tried for two years to push the pact through the cabinet, but failed.

Finally, in August 1987, Hussein announced he was cutting all his remaining ties to the occupied territories. From now on, he said, he would defer to the PLO as the Palestinians' "legitimate representative." Four months later, the *intifada* erupted.

In the spring of 1988, Rabin and Peres adopted a new tack. Rabin's intelligence told him the *intifada* had created a new leadership in the territories, strongly local but firmly tied to the PLO's Tunis leadership. He proposed inviting the Palestinians to elect their own leadership. Israel could then negotiate with "PLO-territories" and ignore "PLO-Tunis."

As new Israeli elections approached that fall, Rabin and Peres wrote their territorial-elections plan into the Labor party platform. The Likud platform countered with its traditional stance of no withdrawal, no talks with the PLO, plus a promise to crush the *intifada*. The vote was a dead heat, forcing the two parties back into their deadlocked unity coalition. Labor's Rabin returned to the Defense Ministry, but Peres was forced to give up the Foreign Ministry.

Labor did manage, however, to have its territorial elections written into the coalition agreement—after a fashion. The pact made no mention of when or how the elections would be held. This allowed Shamir to maintain that elections in the territories were merely a restatement of the stalled Camp David accords between Israel and Egypt, which had called in 1979 for the two nations to negotiate a period of autonomy for the territories. Begin and Anwar Sadat had never been able to agree on the meaning of "autonomy," and the Camp David process had broken down over it. Shamir expected this deadlock to continue, ensuring that nothing would change.

But two weeks after the Israeli elections, everything changed. The Palestine National Council, meeting in Algiers November 15, declared an "independent Palestinian state" in the occupied territories, based on the original United Nations partition plan of 1947. For the first time, the Palestinians had formally accepted the UN decision to create Israel.

For a full month after Algiers, Israelis continued to insist there was nothing new, noting that the PLO decision made no explicit mention of Israel's rights. Fierce international pressure now was placed on Arafat, from Washington, Europe, and left-wing American Jews linked to Labor, to make it explicit. On December 13, Arafat rose before the UN General Assembly in Geneva and declared that the PLO had decided to seek "possible rather than absolute justice," and accepted the 1947 resolution that "provides for the establishment of two states in Palestine, one Palestinian Arab and one Jewish." For good measure, he added that "the future relationship between the State of Palestine and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan will be built on confederal foundations."

After his speech, Arafat called a press conference and read a brief formula dictated to him by the U.S. State Department: the PLO "recognizes Israel's right to exist" and "renounces terrorism." In reply, the United States announced that it was opening a "dialogue" with the PLO. Israel was now truly alone.

The U.S. decision to talk to the PLO has deeply wounded

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Shamir's Israel. Just last November, Shamir told the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations that he could not "comprehend why the dialogue with the PLO terrorists continues."

Actually, Shamir was convinced for the first few weeks after the dialogue began that nothing had changed. But as 1989 opened, his government faced intense pressure to respond to the new constellation. In February, Foreign Minister Moshe Arens, Shamir's closest Likud ally, pointedly told a Knesset committee that Israeli policy would "have to account for the aspirations of the Palestinian people."

Finally, Shamir buckled. At Arens's urging, he met with Rabin and agreed to put the territorial elections plan in gear. On May 15, the cabinet adopted the four-point Shamir-Rabin initiative. Point one called for Palestinian elections, negotiations with the electees for a five-year autonomy period, and final peace talks after that. Point two demanded peace talks with the Arab states. Point three foresaw an international effort to resettle the Palestinian refugees in camps throughout the Middle East. Point four was no talks with the PLO, ever.

There was a good deal of doubt in Israel and around the world whether Shamir was reaching out or merely buying time. But the plan quickly took on a life of its own. Washington hailed it as an important step forward. Even Egypt, working closely with the PLO, called it "positive."

The four-point plan caused an explosion on Shamir's right flank. Housing Minister David Levy, nominally the number-two man in the Likud, told an interviewer in May that he had "accepted the plan when it looked like a way to keep the Americans quiet. But now that everyone is adopting it, I reject it. It contains the seeds of a PLO state." But Shamir held fast.

In August, Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak sent Washington a ten-point paper with ideas for implementing the Shamir plan. Mubarak proposed inviting an Israeli team to Cairo to meet with a handpicked Palestinian delegation and flesh out the mechanics. He proposed that the talks range as well over ideas for a long-range territorial solution. The Palestinian team, he said, would include Arabs from both inside and outside the territories, giving a symbolic presence to the Palestinian diaspora.

Israel reacted with alarm to the Mubarak paper. The proposed "outsiders" on the Palestinian team sounded suspiciously like a back-door entrée to the PLO. Moreover, Shamir and Arens repeated, Israel was not ready to discuss long-range plans—only the elections.

Now Secretary of State James Baker weighed in, offering a five-point elucidation of Mubarak's ten-point proposal. Israel would come to Cairo to meet with the Palestinians, but "only after a satisfactory list of Palestinians has been worked out." The Palestinians would be free to raise broader issues, but Israel would not have to listen. Baker invited the Egyptian and Israeli foreign ministers to Washington to draw up the list of Palestinians. Israel replied to Baker with six "points of concern." The PLO offered seven points of its own.

Baker stonewalled both sides. Shamir's cabinet decided to delay accepting the American five points until after a November visit by Shamir to Washington. Egypt waited silently.

Thus it was that as Shamir arrived in Washington last fall, "you had five points on ten points on four points on agreeing to agree to talk to somebody about talking to somebody about maybe, someday, doing something," in the words of one Capitol Hill aide. "It's all so convoluted, people are beginning to lose interest."

That, in fact, may be just what Shamir has in mind. "We must proceed patiently, knowing that we cannot achieve peace in a single step, or by one stroke of the pen," he told a Jewish rally in Brooklyn after his White House meetings in November. "We are not prepared to work according to the clock, nor do we stand holding a stopwatch. We shall not be pushed or pressured."

The question, still, is whether Shamir really wants to proceed at all. Even Shamir's closest advisers seem to be divided over whether he actually believes long-term Palestinian autonomy can ever fly, or whether he is just playing for time.

But there is a third view, which holds that Shamir now believes peace is taking shape along lines he cannot personally accept. After a lifelong commitment to Greater Israel ideology, in this view, Shamir sees Palestinian statehood along the Amirav-Husseini model as unavoidable, and he knows he must move it forward. But if he can drag it out—four points, ten points, five points, six points—he can delay a decision until 1992, when he is due to retire. Let it happen on someone else's watch.

The West Bank and Gaza, Shamir told his Brooklyn rally, "are part of Eretz Israel. We have a three-thousand-year claim to them." But as the crowd chanted, "Not one inch," the seventy-three-year-old Shamir continued: "The Arabs say they have a claim on them too. It is their right to put their claim against ours. That is what negotiations are for. When the time comes we shall present our claim, and they will present theirs, and we shall negotiate until we shall reach a settlement." □

SCREEN

MYTH & DARKNESS

'MERMAID,' 'TRIUMPH,' & 'CLAUDEL'

There have been so many "adult" cartoons recently—*Rambo*, *Rocky*, *Batman*, *Ghostbusters*—that it is a refreshing shock to get back to the genuine article in *The Little Mermaid*. It has the old Disney magic—vibrant animation, tunefulness, good storytelling, here based on Hans Christian Andersen. *Mermaid* may not be *Snow White* or *Cinderella*, but it is one of the best Disney cartoons in years.

The Little Mermaid has enough verve and wit to please any audience. A mermaid princess, Ariel, falls in love with a human prince, despite the warnings of her father, King Triton, about getting involved with those "barbarians." Ariel persists in her romance, aided by a flounder, a ditzy seagull (with the voice of Buddy Hackett), and a perfectly grumpy crab named Sebastian, who has a wonderful Jamaican accent. A wicked witch named

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Ursula (half-octopus, half-beefy soprano) tries to get Ariel to use love potions to wreck the young mermaid's romance and get revenge on Triton, the witch's ancient enemy. The plot follows some predictable fairy tale lines, including a good, hard dose of terror and anxiety. As many have said, it is sometimes ironic that these stories are thought apt for children.

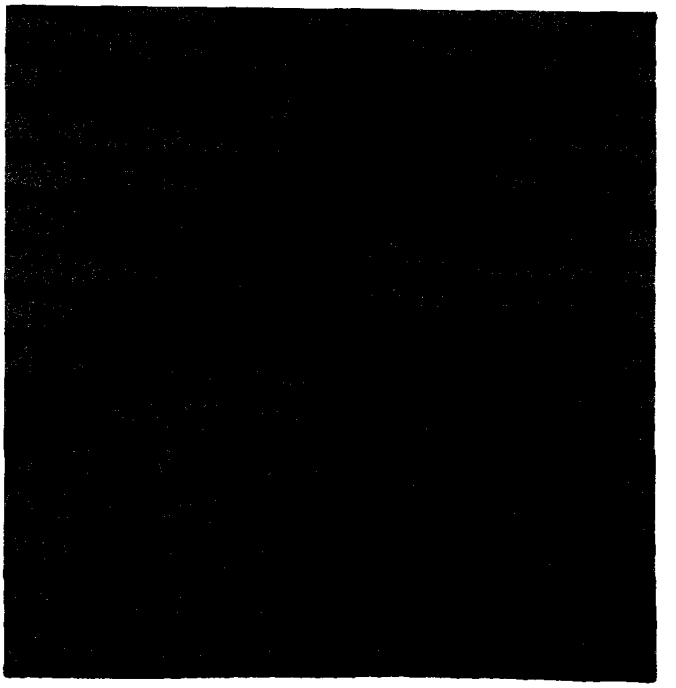
Animation and screenplay in *The Little Mermaid* work well together. The drawing—except for the eyes of the two lovers, which are flat and listless—is excellent; underwater scenes have an exuberant lyricism which recalls *Fantasia*. Several musical numbers stand out: for pure desire, Ariel's first aria; for magnificent comedy, Sebastian's big Reggae number, "Under the Sea," with its inventive variety of water images. The Disney team deserves credit for finding new means to update this classic story, making relevant even its romantic view of "the generation gap." Essential to its success are the voices of Jodi Benson as Ariel, Pat Carroll as Ursula, and Samuel E. Wright as the scene-stealer Sebastian.

Triumph of the Spirit is a particularly bleak Holocaust film, which focuses almost exclusively on day-to-day "life" in Auschwitz. Documentaries and some features have traced the fate of the perpetrators of these crimes (*Hotel Terminus*, *Judgment at Nuremberg*); other works have described in grisly detail how they were committed (*Shoah*); many imports have shown us the fate of deportees and escapees (*The House on Main Street*, *Angry Harvest*); one sporadically strong feature film (*Sophie's Choice*) went inside the camps for key sequences, followed on television by parts of *The Winds of War*. But to my knowledge, no film has ever exclusively focused several hours on the terrors of a death camp and the struggle to survive there.

This disturbingly authentic film, based on a true story, begins in Greece, where Jewish families are living in the ghetto awaiting deportation. The central figure, Salamo Arouch (Willem Dafoe), is a Greek middleweight whose fighting skills eventually enable his survival. After the fateful train ride to the camp, he must endure the separation of his family, not knowing the fate of its female members in the gas chambers, which the movie shows sparingly. With time, he loses both a brother and his father (Robert Loggia). What keeps Arouch going is patronage from one German officer—a former boxer whom he had met at the 1936 Olympics—who uses him as a sure winner to bet on in boxing matches between inmates on SS nights off.

Strong in his support of Dafoe is Edward James Olmos as a gypsy who runs one section of the camp for the SS; casually, with no false hint of moral intention, he teaches Arouch how to endure. Wendy Gazelle, as Dafoe's fiancée, is also affecting; oddly, after interesting us in her, the end of the film never tells us her final fate.

Still, an overview of plot misses the texture of *Triumph of the Spirit*, which is relentless. Producer Arnold Kopelson (*Platoon*) worked hard for this effect. For two hours we watch the inmates at work, a behind-the-scenes look at slave industrial production. The most scarifying moments occur near the end, when the Germans crush a resistance effort as Russians approach.



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Despite the title and hype about the "indomitable sources of the spirit" displayed by Arouch, there is no real triumph here, just survival. As Elie Wiesel has said, to speak of triumph and Auschwitz in the same breath is impossible; there is no way to snatch victory out of the jaws of this defeat. *Triumph of the Spirit* can't really manage this. Its intention is to be honest, but in being so it is likely to drive away even an interested audience. Movies don't have to be optimistic, but they should create some feeling, and this one can't. To its credit it leaves you with a blank numbness appropiate to the horror of its subject.

An equally distressing but well-made film is *Camille Claudel*, the story of Paul Claudel's sister, Auguste Rodin's mistress, and a sculptor only recently being rediscovered in her own right. Camille is strongly played with youthful exuberance, brilliant impulsiveness, progressive dementia and final breakdown by Isabelle Adjani. Rodin is the sturdy Gerard Depardieu. The beginning of the film (directed by Bruno Nuytten, who shot *Manon of the Spring*) is all brightness and hope; the end, when her brother commits Camille to the asylum, tragic darkness.

Camille Claudel won five 1989 Cesars, including Best Film and Best Actress. Gorgeous opening shots explain its awards for Art Direction, Costume, and Cinematography. They illustrate that magic flair for physical beauty, the beauty even of a meal, that explains the vibrant, unique texture of French filmmaking—although it has fewer lively stories to tell than a quarter-century ago. *Camille Claudel* is in love with the beauty of the human form; its early scenes of Adjani sculpting alone or at Rodin's studio have an exciting visual flavor.

The movie invites us to sympathize with Camille as someone whom Rodin abused both as a lover and worker in his studio. But it fails to justify her manic resentment and self-destructive extremism or to make the whims of neglected genius interesting or explicable. It strives to make a feminist point, but confuses two things: an artist who is neglected because of her sex and a woman whose irrationality brought neglect on herself. Thanks to Adjani, the film does make us sad at such a terrible waste of her talent.

TOM O'BRIEN

STAGE

WORDS FAILETH

GELBART'S 'MASTERGATE'

On November 22, President Bush took to television to bring a warm-hearted message to the American people. Not to appear too relaxed, in the Jimmy Carter mode, he wore a blazer and a tie and sat stiffly, his hands in his lap, while stage right a fire flickered in one of those fashionable glass-enclosed fireplaces—the Bush administration's equivalent

Contemporary Theology Issue
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of a roaring fire. He began with the changes in Eastern Europe, fueled presumably by the American idea of political freedom, and then segued into the thousand points of light—his celebrated phrase for governmental inactivity. As soon as those lights came on, I knew that he was not going to get to the dead and exiled Chinese students, who had also been driven by the concept of freedom Bush had just applauded; so I flipped off the television. As it was, I had stayed longer than usual with the president because I was fascinated by his hands, which kept fluttering, trying to escape from his lap, wanting to rise and perform that chopping gesture he habitually uses when he wants to emphasize a particularly empty platitude.

A few days later I saw Arlen Specter on the local (Philadelphia) news. An honorable man as senators go, Specter was trapped by demonstrators outside his house, protesting his vote for continued military aid to El Salvador. The presence of the cameras forced him to respond at once to two buttons, eliciting conflicting statements: a defense of his vote and outraged assurance that something (unspecified) would be done if, indeed, the Salvadoran military proved to have had a hand in the murder of the six Jesuit priests.

Words, words, words, as Hamlet said when Polonius asked him what he had been listening to on television. There is nothing new about the decay of language in the political arena, as *Coriolanus* proved almost four hundred years ago. Still, this is our language, our decay, and it falls to contemporary playwrights to consider the collapse of words in the age of television. Larry Gelbart, who does not pretend to be Shakespeare, is an accomplished satirist who has turned with a vengeance to the subject in *Mastergate*, "a play on words" with a title that not accidentally rhymes with self-abuse. Onanism seems a proper metaphor for contemporary political rhetoric.

The president can command the networks when he has nothing to say at length, but other politicians are victims of the system, reduced to brief sound bites that suggest bumper-sticker philosophy. For that reason, congressional investigations are a boon to public servants, particularly when—as with the Iran-*contra* hearings—the material is scandalous enough to seduce the television mavens into providing extended coverage. Under those circumstances, even the most impressive participants (for instance, Lee Hamilton, looking a great deal more substantial than when I first saw him years ago, tossing candy from an open car during a Fourth of July parade) begin to be infected by self- and ideology-servers, whose predictable blather threatens to drown the addictive listener in a sea of nonmeaning. It is obvious that Gelbart was such a listener and that he saved himself by swimming ashore with *Mastergate* in his teeth.

There is specific satire of the Iran hearings here—portraits that are parodies (if that is possible) of Colonel North and of a familiar sounding vice-president who, unlike the original, testifies for Gelbart—but most of the figures are political stereotypes of the right and left, the north and the south. There is a plot—some-

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thing about financing a movie as a cover for feeding funds illegally to a client nation—but the play is really about language. From the beginning, when the chairman, the sensible sounding Senator Bowman (Jerome Kilty), insists on "broadly narrowing" the investigation, the audience knows that it is in for verbal mayhem. Adverbs undermine verbs, adjectives corrupt nouns, malapropisms abound, platitudes run rampant. Everyone speaks with great sincerity and no sense at all. Gelbart's hearing, like the real thing, is a shambles that passes itself off as a feast of reason.

Mastergate, which came to Broadway after an initial production at the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, is not a play about investigations, it is a mock-hearing. The stage is the witness area and two blocks of questioners are placed midway back in the auditorium. In the middle is the television reporter, who shares inanities with witnesses and committeemen alike, and the whole thing is reproduced—the speakers in close-up—on television sets spaced around the theater. The actors play multiple roles, scurrying from the witness stand to become aggressive or amiable questioners of other witnesses. Whether it was the television lights, the sight lines in the new Criterion Center, or my new glasses, I was pained by the lighting and found myself—appropriately enough—watching the show on one of the television monitors.

Gelbart is very clever and, in this show, relentless. He rides his central conceit with the determination of a congressman who finds himself on camera. Individual lines brought a glow of appreciation to me, but as a whole the show is not funny. It is too much like the real thing. It starts out as an amusingly acid comment on the misuse of language and ends by depressing the audience—which may be Gelbart's political point. As with the Iran-*contra*) hearings, which exhausted me and finally drove me away from the television set, *Mastergate*, relatively short for an evening in the theater, tired me out. I found I could no longer listen. Besides, I was being blinded by those thousand points of light. (Closed in December.) GERALD WEALES

BOOKS

Self-government depends on our selves

DEMOCRACY AND ITS CRITICS
Robert A. Dahl
Yale University Press, $29.95, 397 pp.

Dennis Hale

I can still remember the most shocking revelation to which I was exposed as an innocent young college student. It was not about God, sex, or drugs. It was about politics. One of my classmates confessed to me that he had lost his faith in democracy. At the time, I could not imagine a more bewildering intellectual lapse than this. If a man can't believe in democracy, what can he believe in? I think I was actually a sophomore at the time.

Robert Dahl is the Sterling Professor of Political Science Emeritus at Yale, and he has seen many sophomores come and go—perhaps *too* many. I've been teaching for eleven years, so I've seen a few sophomores myself, and have learned that in answering sophomoric questions the trick is to get the student to look in the other direction while pondering the answer—to see the problem from another angle, to see, in fact, the question behind the question.

Dahl doesn't do this. His is a *literal* answer. He defends democracy by demonstrating, pretty convincingly, that it is the "best feasible system...taken all around." This is what we might call the Churchillian defense ("...the worst form of government, except for all the others that have been tried"). Most people probably already believe in this defense; it is one I could have managed myself, as a sophomore, but it would not have satisfied my friend, whose doubts may have masked a deeper concern. For example: Why isn't democracy better than it is? Or: Given democracy's obvious shortcomings, what are we to do? How worried should we be? Will it ever get better?

In the process of defending democracy, Dahl identifies three main lines of what he calls "adversarial" critics, the most important of whom are advocates of "guardianship," i.e., Platonists, who believe that only trained pilots should be navigating the ship of state. He also provides a Cook's tour of democratic theory. Democratic theory is a "web" with many strands, he argues, some from the ancient Greek city-states, some from the republican cities of the Renaissance, some from the struggles over representative government in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Many of these elements do not fit together very comfortably, leaving both citizens and theorists confused. But Dahl's history of political theory is meant to resolve these confusions by seeking comfort in evolution, in the manner of a college text: the human race struggles through one intellectual quagmire after another, pushing ever upward to the modern democratic state.

This prejudges the discussion, obviously, in two ways. First, it suggests that modern democratic states are about the best we can expect (since they are the most recent expression of this evolutionary advance), a possibility so depressing as to choke off any further thought (and send sophomores running to business school). And second, it prevents us from learning too much from democracy's critics, including, especially,

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An important cause of the confusion over what democracy means in our present world is that it has developed over several thousand years and stems from a variety of sources.... Greek, Roman, medieval, and Renaissance notions intermingle with those of later centuries to produce a jumble of theory and practices that are often deeply inconsistent. What is more, a close look at democratic ideas and practices is bound to reveal a considerable number of problems for which no definitive solution seems to exist.... My aim in this book is to set out an interpretation of democratic theory and practice...that is relevant to the kind of world in which we live or are likely to live in the foreseeable future. But I believe that no interpretation of this kind can be satisfactory unless it deals fairly with the major problems posed by...the critics of democracy.

—Robert A. Dahl
Democracy and Its Critics

the Platonists, who have always tried to warn democrats against extravagant expectations of the "demos," and who have had much to say about political education—about which Dahl says almost nothing.

And what *is* the modern democratic state Dahl wishes to defend? (He calls it a "modern dynamic pluralist society," or "MDP society" for short.) An MDP society typically has three characteristics, each one of which poses problems for democratic theory: it is large; it is governed by representative institutions, rather than by citizens directly; it is also governed increasingly by bureaucratic institutions, both public and private, in which the democratic principle is hard to find; and its citizens are passionate believers in equality. Each of these characteristics, moreover, is *inevitable*.

Some of the best parts of the book are Dahl's efforts to work through these problems. Equality, for example, has meant many things to many people, but in democracy, Dahl reminds us, it must *at least* mean that each citizen is invited to develop his or her capacities to their fullest, a task which requires some degree of self-government. This is, in the end, the finest justification for democracy—that it allows each member of the community to aspire to the dignity of citizenship, a dignity once reserved for the few.

The key word, though, is *aspire*. I am afraid that not many Americans see citizenship as something to be reached for; they see it, no doubt, as something they already have—and from one point of view, of course, they are right. What was once a prized possession, to be fought for or even hoarded by a small minority, is now freely given to all. Has it, therefore, lost much of its ancient value? Or is that another question?

Possibly. But the question of what democratic citizenship can mean in an "MDP society" is the most important political question we face—especially now, as "democracy" in some form is making fresh inroads into the Soviet bloc, even as our own democratic institutions are wearing thin. Unfortunately, Dahl does not move the problem much beyond Madison's tenth *Federalist Paper*: in the large state, citizens participate through representative elections and through interest groups, a form of democracy he long ago labeled "polyarchy." "...[A]ll the institutions of polyarchy [elections, interest groups, free expression, etc.] are necessary to the highest feasible attainment of the democratic process in the government of a country." Necessary, but—as Dahl himself concedes—not always sufficient.

The last chapter is devoted to a consideration of how polyarchies might be made *more* democratic—for example, by ending poverty, bringing more democracy to the workplace, and using, "telecommunications" (computers and interactive cable TV) to reduce the knowledge monopoly of the "policy elites."

None of which, I'm afraid, would have satisfied my college friend. When we despair of democracy, after all, we are not giving up on "process"—we are entertaining profound doubts about our fellow citizens and even about ourselves. No defense of democracy will satisfy our deepest doubts unless it points the way to a restoration of what Chesterton called the "romance" of citizenship, a project that will require more than just a modification of procedures, even more than a settling of old philosophic quarrels over majority rule and minority rights. It may well require the salvation of our souls—which is what the best sophomores are really worried about, anyway. □

WHO DUNIT, IF 'TWAS DONE?

A THIEF IN THE NIGHT
The Mysterious Death of Pope John Paul I
John Cornwell
Simon & Schuster, $21.95, 366 pp.

Barbara A. Bannon

Considering the impact Polish-born Pope John Paul II has had on today's Roman Catholic church, it is not surprising we tend to forget that there had to have been a John Paul I before there could be a John Paul II. The fact that the papacy of John Paul I lasted only thirty-three days, August 26 to September 29, 1978, is what people remember most about him, if they remember anything at all—that and a vague feeling that there were rumors of mystery, possibly conspiracy, even murder associated with the circumstances surrounding his death.

John Cornwell is a highly respected British journalist who has been editor of the Foreign News Service of the *Observer* of London and author of several books. *A Thief in the Night* received high praise in Britain from, among others, Graham

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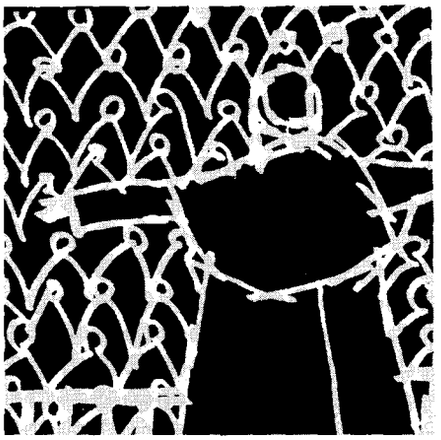

Greene, Anthony Burgess, and the *Times* of London. Cornwell was asked to conduct his investigation by American Archbishop John Foley, "a comparative 'new boy' in the Vatican bureaucracy." Cornwell had considerable help from the Vatican along the way (and some hindrance). He met once with Pope John Paul II who told him, "I want you to know that you have my support and blessing in this work of yours." He used a tape recorder at all times so that the words he attributes to individuals can be authenticated. He admits that he himself is a lapsed Catholic of more than twenty years, a situation he does not expect to change.

Cornwell writes, "the Vatican expected me to prove that John Paul I had not been poisoned by one of their own." Until the very end of this fascinating and enormously detailed mystery story, one cannot fault in any way Cornwell's objectivity. There he draws a pivotal conclusion based on admitted guesswork. He remains, however, a very plausible and conscientious investigator.

It is doubtful whether John Paul II or any other Vatican official would have been willing to give an *imprimatur* to *A Thief in the Night* precisely because Cornwell does find the Vatican culpable in the pope's death although *never* guilty of murder. It is the nature of that culpability and unacknowledged guilt (and what lies behind it) in which Cornwell deeply involves his readers.

He begins by tackling ten questions such as might be raised in connection with any sudden, unexpected death. They range from the time of death and who discovered the body to matters involving an autopsy and embalming. There are other key questions ranging as far as whether morticians were summoned before the pope's body was supposedly found.

Cornwell proves conclusively that wholly unnecessary confusion was aroused by such matters as Vatican unwillingness to admit that a nun (a woman) regularly came into the papal bedchamber early in the morning with a cup of coffee. This seems utterly ridiculous to twentieth-century American and British readers, but it led to all sorts of unnecessary suspicion. Indeed, most of the "mystery" and rumors surrounding the papal death could have been avoided, Cornwell proves, if only good sense had been followed rather than outdated papal protocol.

One of the most interesting and memorable figures involved in the so-called "conspiracy plot" is Archbishop Paul Casimir Marcinkus, born in Cicero, Illinois, and a key figure in Vatican banking circles when those circles were under serious, criminal investigation. Another subject Cornwell was able to see, when previous investigators had been unaware of her existence, was Pope John Paul I's niece, a doctor. She produced vital information about the state of her uncle's health. It is from his interviews with the late pope's two priest secretaries, one Italian, one Irish, that Cornwell draws pivotal and contradictory data, however. Here he embarks on a hypothesis that does solve certain key questions but cannot be supported by facts.

At the heart of this book, however, is a memorable investigation, not so much into the sudden death of Pope John Paul I, but a much more profound inquiry into how the Vatican operates in today's world. There is much here to give any Catholic grounds for deep concern. Some people clearly lied, but which ones? And did they lie out of a desire to protect the papal image or themselves?

Poor Venetian Cardinal Luciani, who became Pope John Paul I, was clearly in over his head. It is curious that he kept noting the next pope would be "a foreigner, the one who sat opposite me during the conclave." That was the Polish Cardinal Wojtyla, who went on to become Pope John Paul II. □

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INTELLECTUAL GUNSLINGER

STRAIGHT SHOOTING
What's Wrong with America and How to Fix It
John Silber
Harper & Row, $22.50, 336 pp.

Don Wycliff

Has there been a moment since at least 1929 when a fair-minded observer couldn't have said what John Silber says at the start of this book: "Our [American] society is in trouble and we all know it"? Probably not.

Has there been a moment when it could have been said with better reason that now? Silber, the philosopher-president of Boston University, makes a mildly persuasive case that this is a uniquely troubled moment for America. Why? He says, "we bear the unmistakable traces of self-indulgence....We seem incapable of making those decisions that, though imperative for our own well-being and that of our children, require unwelcome self-restraint and self-denial."

The example that leaps most readily to my mind is our inability to balance the national budget. But Mr. Silber finds the strongest evidence of failure "in our inability to reform our public schools." The root of our moral confusion and flaccidity is a "forty-year experiment with luxury, a luxury unprecedented in degree, in duration, and in distribution."

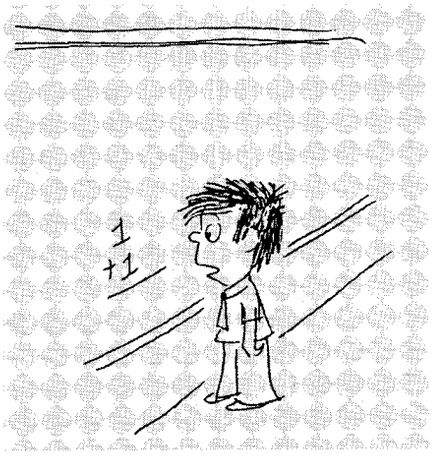
If this sounds vaguely familiar, readers might recall some of the warnings about the dangers of materialism that Pope John Paul II has voiced during his pastoral visits to North America and northern Europe. Even the pope, however, seems reluctant to employ the moralistic vocabulary and tone that Mr. Silber uses without apology.

No apology is called for, Silber believes, because our present crisis is fundamentally one of morality. And that needs to be said forthrightly to a people who have largely forgotten how to think in moral philosophical terms and, more important, have failed to teach their children so to think.

"In recent years," Silber writes, "our society has become increasingly secular, and the curriculum of the public schools has been stripped of almost all ethical content. As a result, universities must confront a student body ignorant of the evidence and arguments that underlie and support many traditional moral principles and practices."

The book is divided into three parts, each of which comprises a set of freestanding but related essays on one general subject. The first two parts are devoted to education at the school and university levels. Silber diagnoses what he perceives as the failures of American education and offers telling criticisms that ought to make more than a few of his fellow academics squirm in their seats.

Silber's prescriptions go beyond calls to juice up the moral/ethical/philosophical content of the curriculum. He wants to see the educational system expanded at the bottom end to provide a head start for children of the underclass. Silber would like to see a change in the way the federal government provides financial aid so that college students can borrow against their own future earnings (with repayment guaranteed through payroll deductions), rather than against their own or their parents' current incomes. Michael Dukakis offered a similar plan during his 1988 presidential campaign. It's an idea that deserves to be explored.



"So much to learn — so little time."

One of the most disturbing parts of the book is the essay "The 'Private' Sector and the Public Interest." Silber's purpose is clearly political: to justify and build public support for additional state funding to private universities and colleges, including his own. In the process he comes close to asserting that there is nothing intellectually and educationally distinctive about private institutions as opposed to state-sponsored ones.

While that may be true of some private institutions, it ought not to be. I suspect it is not true of most religiously affiliated institutions, including Catholic ones. Yet Silber seems not to recognize the difference. In fact, he gives the distinct (and, to me, discomfiting) impression that the reason may be that he does not respect that difference intellectually.

The third big chunk of the book seems gratuitous and out of place. These essays deal with selected aspects of American foreign policy, including the various conflicts in Central America and our evolving relationship with the Soviet Union and the East bloc. Mr. Silber is well-known as a hawkish anti-Communist, yet Mikhail Gorbachev's policies have caused him to entertain some second thoughts. The Soviet parliamentary elections early last year and evidences of *glasnost*, like the admission of Stalin's mass murders, seem to have influenced Silber—almost. "At the present rate," he writes, "it will soon hardly matter whether the situation reflects Gorbachev's intentions or has gone out of his control. It will take a series of regimes as tyrannical as Stalin's to have any hope of obscuring the record now revealed."

For the most part, Silber's essays began as speeches; in too many cases they still read like speeches. That's unfortunate, because it detracts from the message Silber tries to deliver. Outrageous overstatement might be effective in a speech; in an essay it comes off as simply outrageous. When it comes from someone with John Silber's reputation as a kind of intellectual gunslinger, many people are likely to write it off as simply Silber. □

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NEITHER MARKET NOR STATE

WHOSE KEEPER?
Social Science and Moral Obligation
Alan Wolfe
University of California Press, $25,
371 pp.

Jean Bethke Elshtain

This is a timely and important book. Alan Wolfe notes in his preface that *Whose Keeper?* represents an important change in direction for him. His previous works were framed, roughly, by a horizon of Marxist political economic assumptions. But, having become the father of two small children, and having continued to think rather than allow his reflections to ossify into the dogmas of either the left or the right, Wolfe has accomplished a minor miracle. He has written a book that offers genuinely fresh insights into the ever more intractable dilemmas of modernity.

Wolfe speaks directly to our discontents. For all our successes in modern societies, especially in the United States, there is a sense, desperate in some cases, that all is not well, that something has gone terribly awry. We citizens of liberal democratic societies rightly understand and cherish our freedom, Wolfe insists, but we are "confused when it comes to recognizing the social obligations that make...freedom possible in the first place." This confusion permeates all levels, from the marketplace to the home, to the academy, especially the academy. For ensconced within its ivy-less confines, various abstract moral philosophers and a growing number of practitioners of a brand of econometrics called "rational choice," insistently press their claims to truth and scientific veracity. But, Wolfe claims, their arguments and assumptions are very wide of the mark.

For example, the grand schemas of philosophers who rely on "abstract formulations of universal criteria of justice..." would, if taken seriously and implemented, deepen rather than ameliorate our discontents by further corroding our particular ties and obligations to families, friends, neighbors. Economists working with a "rational choice" model are determined to reinterpret every feature of human existence in line with a narrow market mode of behavior. When people do not behave as the model dictates, it is because they are aberrant in some important respect, unable to "make the optimal decision." For the assumptions of the market, and calculations of "marginal utility," ought to reign everywhere. Some even go so far as to propose a free market in babies where "baby prices" are "quoted as prices of soybean futures." Were this to be done, white baby prices would go higher than nonwhite baby prices, but, finally, the market would smooth it all out and we wouldn't have to mess with the murky business of adoption and fretting about children born out of wedlock. This is one of several hair-raising examples, noted by Wolfe, of market economics carried to an extreme.

The political fallout of our current moral crisis—Wolfe insists that the social sciences are moral sciences and politics an ethical practice—is reflected in the irony of a morally exhausted left embracing rather than challenging the logic of the market by endorsing the relentless translations of *wants* into *rights*. Although, Wolfe observes, the left continues to argue for taming the market in a strictly economic sense, it follows the market model where social relations are concerned, seeing in any restriction of individual "freedom" to live any sort of lifestyle an unacceptable diminution of choice. On the other hand, many conservatives love the untrammeled (or the-less-trammeled-the-better) operations of the market in economic life, but call for a restoration of traditional morality, including strict sexual scripts for men and women, in social life. Both these logics, left and right alike, are doomed to self-destruct. Why? Wolfe responds: because

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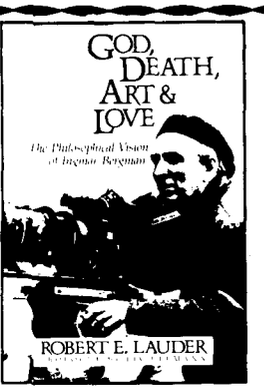
—ANDREW M. GREELEY



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they rely either on the market or the state "to organize their codes of moral obligation" when what we really need is "civil society—families, communities, friendship networks, solidaristic workplace ties, voluntarism, spontaneous groups and movements—not to reject, but to complete the project of modernity."

Wolfe throws down a challenge to his own discipline, sociology: if economics has become captive to markets and political science to the state, a grand sociological tradition—with its moral message that society is a "precious gift"—must be revivified. Wolfe reminds the reader that early theoreticians of liberal civil society were quite careful to limit the sphere of capitalist economics by either assuming or reiterating a very different logic, the moral ties that bind in the realms of family, religion, voluntary association, community. The market was not to be extended as a metaphor for a process of all-encompassing exchange. This was a foreign idea even to Adam Smith, who understood, Wolfe insists, that were we to organize "all our social relations by the same logic we use in seeking a good bargain," we could not "even have friends, for everyone else interferes with our ability to calculate conditions that will maximize self-interest."

But what about the welfare state? Is it not a solution to the problems thrown up by the operations of the market? Wolfe argues that it is not and that we now know enough to understand why and to track the negative, if unintended, consequences of modern statism. The welfare state emerged out of a set of ethical concerns and passions which ushered in the conviction that the state was the "only agent capable of serving as a surrogate for moral ties of civil society" once these began to succumb to market pressure. But over forty years of evidence is in and it is clear, he claims, that when the welfare state *substitutes* for those ties it works less and less well.

> *Liberal democracies face discontents because they tend to rely on either individualistic moral codes associated with the market or collective moral codes associated with the state, yet neither set of codes can successfully address all the issues that confront society*
>
> Alan Wolfe
> —*Whose Keeper?*

Welfare statism as a totalizing logic erodes "the very social ties that make government possible in the first place." Government can strengthen moral obligations but cannot substitute for them. Wolfe's conclusion, which I share, is that as our sense of particular, morally grounded responsibilities to an intergenerational web falters and the state moves in to treat the dislocations, it may temporarily "solve" problems of care, broadly defined. But these solutions, over time, thin out the skein of obligation. Eventually, support for the welfare state itself begins to decline. A politics of resentment, evident in tax evasion, black markets, proliferation of asocial behavior, all adding up to socially generated selfishness as a form of revolt against an intrusive and abstract "caregiver," grows apace.

Even those Scandinavian societies, especially Sweden, pointed to by liberal democrats as exemplary welfare states, look far less attractive close-up. Wolfe, an expert on Scandinavian social systems, agrees with the great social theorist Jurgen Habermas that a *therapeutocracy*, a world in which "professional expertise comes increasingly to substitute for family autonomy," is everywhere in evidence. Indeed, the Swedish method of transferring children to foster homes and institutions became so extreme in the 1970s that Sweden developed a world reputation as the home of a "child Gulag." Although the Swedes have tried, as a result of criticism, to reduce the numbers of institutionalized children, nearly half of all Swedish children are born out of wedlock. Rates of crime, alcoholism and, to a lesser degree, suicide, are on the rise as are breaking and entering and other crimes that "break down the kinds of trust and mutual help networks of civil society."

Wolfe unpacks another irony: as the welfare state becomes the "primary moral agent in society" it increasingly transfers funds not from the rich to the poor so much as to the middle class, which garners a disproportionate amount of benefits in all welfare state systems. The reasons are many but one stands out in his argument—the educated middle classes are in a better position to organize to take advantage of government-provided services. This is especially true of child care. For example: the giant ABC child-care bill, the liberal democratic "answer" to the child-care dilemma, legislates transfers upward to two-career families with incomes of $37,000 or above. Those who most benefit are not those most in need.

Where does this leave us? Wolfe does not present a menu of premature policy proposals of his own. He understands that the crisis of modernity is an ethical one. It cannot be "solved" through managerial expertise. He calls for a perspective on moral agency, grounded in a revivification of the theory and practice of civil society, that "allows us to view moral obligation as a socially constructed practice negotiated between learning agents capable of growth on the one hand and a culture capable of change on the other." Neither the theory nor practice of markets and states, it seems, makes possible a perspective that is both rule-governed and protective of individual freedom. Genuine freedom is protected only if strong intimate relations "that enable us to resist mass society's pressure to conform" flourish. Obligation to impersonal others, including future generations, begins as a cluster of obligations to particular others. All the evidence amassed on this matter indicates to Wolfe that "people are more likely to volunteer and to give

REVIEWERS

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DON WYCLIFF *is an editorial writer for the* New York Times.

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charity...when family and community relations in the intimate sector of society are strong."

We cannot rely on either markets or states to make us decent or to create a decent society. Wolfe is alarmed, rightly so, for he fears we are in peril of losing the "gift of society." His book reminds us of just what a precious and precarious gift that is. □

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 2)

tance from the U.S. Treasury. The claim that Israel more than repays the cost through its service to U.S. geostrategic interests is open to a debate which we will not here join, beyond saying that in our view Israel's most valid claims to U.S. support are rooted in history and ethics, not in power equations.

—A great many areas of the world, including Manhattan and Chicago, do indeed represent the ill-gotten gains of conquerors and colonizers who used violence and deceit to gain control. It is, however, about as feasible to restore the Americas to the descendants of the original inhabitants as it would be to revoke the Norman conquest of England. And times change. Though some people may still believe in a "right" of conquest and colonization, very few are willing to assert it. The contemporary view—and we are talking about *now*, not *then*—is that the sins of our fathers are to be regretted rather than repeated.

—Archaelogical and historical evidence of Jewish links to "Judea and Samaria" is indisputable—and is overborne by demographic and historical evidence supporting the claims of the present inhabitants, who are, despite the settlements, overwhelmingly Palestinian, and whose progenitors have tilled the land for centuries.

—No doubt some Palestinian and other Arab factions are making what might be called "noises" about their situation. But those Palestinians who are willing to acknowledge Israel's *de facto* existence and to negotiate demonstrably fair security arrangements for both peoples, and who in return ask for recognition of themselves as a nation, for their own courts and schools, for control of the land they live on and the water they need—in short, for civil, national, and human rights—are uttering what the U.S. Catholic bishops have rightly called "cries for justice."

THE EDITORS

Martyrs, music, dignity

St. Davids, Pa.

To the Editors: Your editorial "Onward" [November 17] was read juxtaposed with the *Kiss of the Spider Woman* on television that night and the news of the sad death of the recent martyrs in San Salvador. Your concern about people leaving the church (I am now an Episcopalian) stirred feelings quite poignant in light of both the movie and the news.

I thought of the anima (nondualism? Eros?) of the gay prisoner in the movie: his ability to savor the sensuous in life and in imagination, the sacramental, the incarnational. The reality was so obvious that the animus of the other prisoner, though respected, could not be engaged with body and soul.

So I have felt about the grace/gift of the local Episcopal church over the local Roman Catholic church. *Commonweal*, Rahner, Merton, a non-Catholic father—all made change possible. Music, dignity in liturgy and word, beauty in sound, sight, smell, and movement are not mere sound and sight but the stuff of this life—the "eschatology of the ordinary" that I read about elsewhere recently. So much else is animus, respected: the organization needed, the formality of opposition within the church. Of the Salvadoran Catholic martyrs, toward whom I still feel as a brother, I stand in awe and human sadness at their suffering. But where I live in this one small suburb, I fall before God in one Episcopal church's glory.

RUSS SULLIVAN

Soul games

Hamden, Conn.

To the Editors: Keating Holland's report ["Who's First?," November 3] on

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Catholics' disproportionate attachment to baseball did not surprise me at all. As a fellow beer-drinker, I cannot disprove some significance for that additional correlation which he mentions, but I am convinced there is another reason. Although not a Catholic, A. Bartlett Giamatti understood it. In his essay, "The Green Fields of the Mind," he began by noting "the game's deep patterns, three strikes, three outs, three times three innings, and its deepest impulse, to go out and back, to leave and to return home," and concluded: "It was meant to foster in me again the illusion that there was something abiding, some pattern and some impulse that could come together to make a reality that would resist the corrosion....I need to think something lasts forever, and it might as well be that state of being that is a game."

In the more serious game for our souls we cling to a combination of faith and hope that something, not founded on illusion, lasts forever and can ultimately bring us home.

BRUCE MARTIN RUSSETT

Why the Middle East?

Berkeley, Calif.

To the Editors: How is it that the U.S. Catholic bishops find it necessary to promulgate a statement on the Middle East [November 3] and, in particular, to address Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza? From whence this sudden concern for national rights? What were the bishops doing when tens of thousands of Ibo died of starvation or from Nigerian bombardment when the Ibo people sought political nationhood? Did I miss the bishops' statement on the rights of the peoples of the southern Sudan to self-determination—or could it be that the starvation and death daily visited upon the black Southerners by a Moslem government in Khartoum has escaped the bishops' notice? Does the U.S. bishops' foreign policy not extend to the Kurds, or did word of the Iraqi government's use of nerve gas in Kurdistan not penetrate the corridors of Catholic power? And what about Basque independence? No word from the bishops? Or did I miss that statement?

In brief, why is it that the struggle of the Jews and the Arabs has caught the fancy of the American church? Given the long, ugly, and shameful history of anti-Semitism in our church, one obvious answer suggests itself: only the actions of Jews merit criticism and comment. How shameful.

DANIEL J. LEER

Invisible women

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: In the current controversy over the ownership of Auschwitz one thing seems startlingly clear. Whoever the owners are, they are men. John Pawlikowski's commentary ["A Sign of Contradiction," September 22], which barely mentions the Carmelite women at the center of the controversy, would be extraordinary for that fact were it not so common. For in discussing the issue no one, so far as I have been able to tell, is concerned about the rights of the women religious. Are they nonpersons? Do they have any rights? Do they even have names? Apparently not. I have seen them described by religious leaders of all stripes only as "those nuns," "that convent," or simply "them," as in "Let them pray elsewhere."

There seems to be no question among the religious leaders, both Catholic and Jewish, of their right to decide for the women where they should be. Pawlikowski proposes an "agenda" including steps to "move the Carmelites to an intermediate site...." It sounds like a bill of lading. Later on comes a final solution? Considering that Auschwitz was originally built by people

who had agendas for other people, the controversy seems sadly ironic.

It is hard to believe that the opinions of the religious resident at Auschwitz would be so irrelevant or the community so anonymous were they men—male Carmelites or another group of male contemplatives, like Trappists. Rather than squabbling among themselves the Catholic and Jewish leaders might better join forces for they seem cut from the same cloth, natural allies in the struggle to preserve male control in religious affairs.

DAVID K. O'ROURKE, O.P

Nuns at Auschwitz

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: I have just returned from Poland where, in addition to several on-site inspections, I had an opportunity to discuss the Auschwitz convent with the Primate of Poland, Cardinal Glemp, Cardinal Macharski, and the Carmelite Superiors. Upon my return, I was astounded by some erroneous statements on the subject in the Catholic press, including *Commonweal*'s "A Sign of Contradiction" by John T. Pawlikowski [September 22]. This article absolutely disregards the law of the church, codified in the new *Code of Canon Law* (674), which defines the nature of an institute of consecrated life such as the convent of Discalced Carmelite nuns in Auschwitz: "Institutes which are wholly ordered to contemplation always retain a distinguished position in the mystical Body of Christ; for they offer an extraordinary sacrifice of praise to God, they illuminate the people of God with the richest fruits of their sanctity, they move it by their example, and extend it through their hidden apostolic fruitfulness. For this reason, however much the needs of the active apostolate demand it, members of these institutes cannot be summoned to aid in various pastoral ministries."

Since in the Roman Catholic church nobody, not even a cardinal, is above the law and since canon 616 demands a formal decree of the Apostolic See when a convent of contemplative nuns is involved, one shouldn't be surprised about Cardinal Glemp's doubts whether "four cardinals" were really competent in this matter. John Pawlikowski's suggestion "to move the Carmelites to an intermediate site until the design for the interreligious center can be completed and financing secured" is rather surprising; not to mention the "immediate removal of the cross" from the site where

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22,000 Polish Catholics, and no Jews, were executed and which does not stand on convent grounds and is outside of the proper Auschwitz death camp.

A few years ago in our own country, when "Jewish war veterans" demanded and obtained from a judge a favorable opinion on "the removal of a sixty-five-foot-high wooden cross overlooking a U.S. Marine Corps base," there was an outcry from people living near the base which caused former Marine Corps Commandant P.X. Kelley to reverse the base commander's decision and to order that the cross remain.

If the feelings of the local population and the commandant's decision were not branded as "anti-Semitic" in the U.S., there is no reason to raise such an accusation in Poland where people of all religious and ethnic backgrounds have the right to mourn their losses as do the Jews....There will certainly be no protest if the Jewish people erect a menorah at the Birkenau site (part of the Auschwitz complex), where the unique Jewish tragedy took place.

As far as the Discalced Carmelite nuns are concerned it is extremely objectionable...to treat them like inanimate objects, to barter away, to move them around, and to assign them duties at the "interreligious center" which are not compatible with their specific religious vocation. Also the selection of a site for their "future convent" in a marshy area, which may be cheap to purchase but very unhealthy, should be at least discussed with the sisters.

DR. WACLAW ZAJACZKOWSKI
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A creditable job

Dayton, Ohio

To the Editors: A caveat needs to be offered over the letter of Marian Burkhart [November 3] regarding the Rev. Paul Dinter's article, "Standing in the Way of Worship" [June 16].

Dinter reemphasized his point in the September 22 issue: "...behind the pastor's refusal of Matt's eucharistic bread and our pastors' failure to be imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy lies the model of sacramental power still operative in priestly circles...."

Marian Burkhart believes she's arguing against Dinter, but she's agreeing with him when she writes: "...none has been other than humble when he allowed himself to be the means by which the bread and wine become Christ—the miracle at the center of the liturgy and my faith."

Apparently, many priests are still overly pleased with the sacramental power of speaking and believing that something wonderful happens when they speak. Priests too had understood for many years before Vatican II that there's more to the liturgy than that awesome moment of consecration. Many are now doing a creditable job and I'm glad that Burkhart is doing her share in the Sunday celebrations....

BOB MASS

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